

Public Administration

The Journal of the Institute of Public Administration,
Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, S.W.1

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LONDON: THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION,
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The Civil Service and the War

By SIR GWILYM GIBBON, C.B., C.B.E., D.Sc.

THE Civil Service has been sharply, by some bitterly, attacked in recent months. The "sack-the-lot" school can be ignored—ignored here but not in general discussion, for its exponents impress the general public by their very violence and the ordinary man moves more by feeling than by thought, and one of the pillars of good government will be cracked if the public loses trust in its servants. Loss of confidence in its servants played a part in the downfall of the German Republic, especially in contrast with their integrity and the trust reposed in them under the Empire.

It would, of course, be absurd, and in any event foolishly futile, to claim that the Civil Service should be immune from criticism, even exaggerated criticism, for some excess is the price of freedom, and a cheap price at that. And that holds true even though the Civil Service is not allowed the joy of hitting back, except on occasion, and even then with gloves so abundantly padded as to guarantee that the blows shall not hurt, and the virtue of blows is that they do hurt, even if not spitefully so. But what may be asked is that criticisms should be made with some sense of responsibility, with some appreciation of what is involved for good government, especially at a time like this when the country is fighting for its very existence. This is certainly not a time for hitting heads just for cheap amusement. Were it not for the influence of exuberant outbursts on the more credulous, the vocalists might be left to enjoy their top notes, because few of them really mean what they say, being of the tribe who shout in superlatives.

What is serious is that many critics of sober mind, men who realise the essential need of a Civil Service strong and able, with the confidence of Parliament and the country at its back, are genuinely uneasy, are afraid that the Civil Service is not rising to the great challenge of the present emergency and is not adapting itself quickly and with vigour to its urgency. This kind of criticism should be frankly examined; where it is right, as I think it is in a measure, the needed reforms should be effected, and where mistaken, as I believe it is largely, it should be rebutted. If it should be said that, as a former civil servant I am not an impartial judge, I may fairly

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say that I have not been backward in criticising my own household where I thought criticism justified and in the public interest.

Among the best of the more informed criticisms are those contained in two articles which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* of the 10th and 12th June last under the name of "Protagoras." He makes many shrewd hits, but in my view fails to convey a right impression. The Civil Service is a whole, but within this whole there are many and wide differences, not only in functions but also in methods, and that not only between departments but even between divisions within the same department. One might think, from some of the critics, that in the years before the present war the Civil Service had been basking in halcyon days, with waters calm and sailing easy. Many of the present civil servants had to pass through the severe ordeal of the last war, as testing, especially in its latter part, as anything yet encountered in the present struggle. And times have not been easy since the peace. On the contrary, there have been periods only a few degrees less hectic and of less demand on initiative, ability and quick adaptability than those of the war itself, crises which have had to be quickly surmounted, at times in circumstances of difficulty, political and other. It is nonsense to imagine that the Civil Service passed through these days in swaddling clothes. On the contrary, had a foreseeing superman wished to tutor the Service to ready adaptability and quick decision for an even greater crisis he could scarcely have devised a better school of training short of war itself. A better sense of proportion would be developed if some of the critics compared the achievements of our own Civil (and, it may be added, municipal) Service with those of their corresponding fellows in other countries.

But this is far from saying that the critics are wholly wrong; on the contrary, a valuable public service is rendered in drawing attention to shortcomings, and others besides those which are usually mentioned might be instanced, such as insufficient planning of long-term programmes—subject, of course, to ministerial decisions on policy—programmes elastic and provisional, to be altered, perhaps entirely scrapped, if experience so counsels. This is so even though much of the present simple faith in planning (a word become even more blessed than Mesopotamia) is comic when one remembers the frail fallibility of man's foresight, and I speak as one who has fought hard for planning long before it became the popular panacea of the schools.

The most common complaint against the Civil Service is, to use the words of "Protagoras," that it "has failed to keep pace with the ever-quickenning tempo of modern times"—to put it another way, that the Service is still living in the days of the horse, with its gentle

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trot and occasional sharp gallop, and has not yet caught up with the motor-car. With this charge is connected a number of others: that the type of person entering the Civil Service, and his experience within it, is adapted more for exhaustive examination of issues than quick executive action; that the changes which have taken place in recent years (from what has been called the regulatory to the service state) increasingly calls for the latter quality; that far too much is sacrificed in time, men and money on the altar of meticulous accuracy; that too much detailed control is exercised by the Treasury where there is expenditure of national monies; that there is far too little delegation, with grave consequent waste and (rarely mentioned by the critics but even more important in some respects) such overwhelming of men in positions of high responsibility with day-to-day work that they have little time for the larger issues of their duties, possibly not time even to realise that some of the issues exist.

Some of the critics are more drastic. They express doubts whether the present methods of recruiting for the higher posts are suitable for finding men fitted for modern requirements, and point out that these methods were adopted when governmental functions were very different from those of to-day; especially do they declare that the ordinary virtues of the civil servant are far from enough in a time of war and that much more of the "business" attitude and aptitude is then required.

THE MANNING OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

Let us first consider the methods of recruitment, far the most important matter: organisation and methods spring from men, not the contrary. Despite all criticisms, no better method than the present has yet been devised for obtaining suitable recruits—no better method in principle, that is; there is room for improvement in particulars. Other methods are being tried, especially in the U.S.A., for testing more directly the qualities which are required, but, while they are promising, especially for selecting persons for positions of much routine, it certainly has not been proved that they would yield better results than the present practice in this country. I say this though well aware of the amazing discrepancies revealed by recent investigations in the markings of the same paper by different examiners or by the same examiner at different times, facts which illustrate anew how various is man and how variable the individual man. The whole colour of a man's morning may depend on whether the breakfast has been good or the wife smiling or exacting.

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Any test by examination can be no more than a presumption of competence; there is but one conclusive test, that of actually doing the work. This is why the probationary period (of two years for the higher administrative class) is so important and why its too frequent perfunctory application in former years has now been made more strict. But still not strict or comprehensive enough. The method and scope of its application need to be more considered. In particular (but far from alone) the test should be of fitness not only for the work which the candidate is called upon to do as, for instance, an assistant principal, but also for the higher posts which he must be able to fill efficiently if he is not to be a bad investment for the State.

There has been in later years much more promotion from the lower ranks of the Service to the administrative class. The improvements needed here are a more systematic watch for high ability (and there is a good deal of it) and early promotion of men of proven worth, when they are still young and their powers not clogged by years of less important work. There has been another quarter in which much, but not enough, progress has been made in recent years. In any sphere of work there are likely to be a few persons who tower above their fellows in ability for the particular kind of work to be done, just as a few tower over their fellows in height. Progress and excellence of management depend largely on finding out these men early and on promoting them quickly to posts of higher and higher responsibility, if and as they prove their exceptional qualities at each level, for it is by no means certain that the man who proves a giant at, say, level C will equally tower at level D. The needed advance will not be made in this matter until the facts about the distribution of human ability are better known and more satisfactory measures are applied for finding out exceptional ability in whatever class or grade it may be found, measures which are comprehensive and, so far as may be, impartial and free from personal prejudices and preferences. The fallacy still prevails that any man of sense and honest intent is a good judge of men's ability, though few would think so if the animal to be judged were a horse!

This leads me to another of the most frequent charges made against the Civil Service, that they are far too ardent worshippers of safety—first, as lamentable a precept of administration as a counsel of life. The charge has substance. But the chief culprits are the masters, direct and indirect—ministers and Parliament, public opinion and (not least) the Press. Despite their criticisms, all are too ready to treat a departmental mistake as though it were a criminal offence. If

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a boy is to be blackguarded or ridiculed every time he is found with a spot of dirt on his face, he is going to spend far too much time, soap and water on washing. One of the biggest helps towards the cure of too much safety-first is that all these masters should realise much more clearly that occasional mistakes, sometimes even big mistakes, are inevitable in the best work—and also should learn to distinguish between the culpability of a mistake in millions from that of a mistake in a decimal figure.

Still more serious is the charge that in recent years in particular there has been a tendency to appoint to the top posts safe men rather than men of initiative and enterprise and, in particular, men who will keep their ministers out of trouble. There is probably some substance in this charge, though not so much as some imagine. In this country, policy, in big matters at any rate, is supposed to be decided by ministers, either in Cabinet or, in lesser matters, on their own. If the charge means that civil servants play for safety by trying to persuade their ministers to tread the smooth paths of a quiet existence instead of the hard trails of reforms needful for the public good, then the evil lies much deeper than the Civil Service, right down in the ranks of those who govern us. Admittedly there is a field here which badly needs more investigation, but that is another story. It is the duty of the civil servant to help keep his minister out of trouble (unless the latter has a cushy job he is likely in these days to have enough of it in any event), but not by counselling the shirking of public duty. It is equally his task to advise his minister candidly of objections to, and difficulties likely to arise from, proposed measures, but also (and certainly not less) once a policy has been adopted to implement that policy to the best of his ability—to put it into its working clothes, as I have expressed it elsewhere.

What, I suspect, is really at the back of the minds of some of the critics is that leading civil servants should initiate reforms so far as they may. That they should urge the virtues of administrative reforms, and the machinery and methods of carrying out the purposes of government, yes: administration is their job. That they should as civil servants press for reforms of policy, of the purposes of government—that raises a radically different issue: it would certainly be contrary to the intent of our constitution and, despite some particular instances which might be urged to the contrary (by no means always rightly so), would probably do much more harm than good, might indeed be disastrous. And I speak as one who has had many reforming bees buzzing in his bonnet. It would not be healthy for the country to have civil servants of position campaigning for big reforms behind closed doors.

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It may be said that the Civil Service is too orthodox to be a good adviser in a time of "total war," especially one coming so soon after a previous total war which had heavily drained the resources of the country. Of course the Civil Service tends to be orthodox; that is the Civil Service which, on the whole, the country wants, however unpalatable this fact may be to "revolutionaries," pink or deep-red. But with the experience of the last war still fresh, the Civil Service is likely to be readier for exceptional measures than most of the community, and has indeed been accused of being too ready for what the objectors condemn as autocratic interference with men and matters. Many more proposals emanate from civil servants than is known to the general public, for the Service is a silent service. There is urgent need for bold initiative in the present crisis and, for the quicker and more thorough defeat of the enemy, we should not disdain to learn from the spirit (as distinct from the measures) of his daring and vigorous unorthodoxy. The first charge on the Government must be the mobilisation and use of the military power of the country: many feel that we are still backward in mobilising its economic and financial resources. This end is best achieved not by still another new ministry, we are in danger of being cluttered with ministries, but by formulating and applying a considered policy, to be kept abreast of needs and conditions, under a Cabinet Minister of perspicacity and drive, advised by a carefully selected body of men of wide knowledge, initiative and hard sense, drawn from the Civil Service and from outside.

But what of the contention, express or implied, that whatever may be the case in time of peace, in time of war at any rate the departments directly engaged in war work should be run by business men, because what the country wants are quick decisions, drive and readiness to take risks. "Business man" seems to many a kind of talisman, guaranteed to see us through all our troubles.

This is a pathetic faith, the more so because so contrary to experience, this faith that, because a man has been successful, perhaps hugely successful, in his own business, he is therefore well qualified to run a big department of State, or a big division of a department. He may or may not be, it is about an equal chance. There were failures as well as successes in the last war, as in the present if report be true; and in both some of the great successes outside the Civil Service have been men who were not leaders in business, persons with instinctive judgment for men and affairs, with the gift of leaving to others all but the big things, with the demoniac drive and touch of ruthlessness which are essential for great achievement. And some of those who won high reputation for their services owed much to civil servants, some of them at the outset not of high rank. Many

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civil servants later received tempting business offers because of the impression they had made.

In business, men often succeed less because they are good organisers than because they have a special flair, are ready to take big risks which have come off (those who have risked and fallen by the way lie in unnoticed graves), and possess a native tenacity to succeed. A large proportion of them have had little experience in the work of hammering out big new problems such as arise in a large government department, especially during time of war, with the multitude of interests to be considered and the many conflicting claims to be resolved, not just conflicting claims of persons or concerns but also of national interests. Many of them, too, accustomed to be masters in their own household chafe in the harness when they have to work as one in a team. Much more might be said on this subject, but this is enough. The fact is that the business man who may be a paragon in the, to him, straight road of his accustomed labours may be bewildered by the maze of paths and trails of a government department, and, indeed, in his bewilderment may become more red-tapey than the reddest of conservative civil servants.

Which is by no means to say that men of the highest calibre for running government departments and sections of them are not to be found in the business world. But they do not grow on every bush (which is the fallacy that I am countering), and have to be sought. The practice which in general works best in time of war is a mixture of business man and civil servant. The business man is essential in many matters. His particular knowledge and wisdom of experience (of intangibles as well as tangibles) is usually beyond the reach of the civil servant, and the latter can easily commit blunders galore if these are not available to him.

The selection of business men called in to help in times of special emergencies has been much too haphazard. It is not enough to depend just on someone's recommendation, however highly placed he may be. Something much more systematic is required and, for the more important posts at any rate, a broad selection before the emergency arises, with check of the choice at that time to make sure that so far as can be seen it is still the best. Here, again, the only real test is the actual doing of the work, and if a man does not measure up to his job he should be replaced with reasonable promptitude, however eminent he may be, just as should a civil servant who may have been admirable in peace and may prove admirable in war at work which suits him but fails to rise to the task to which he has been allotted. A kindly ruthlessness is as essential in civilian as in military service, especially when the country is battling for existence.

It has been suggested that the calibre of the men now in the higher

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ranks of the Civil Service is lower than in 1914. Speaking with knowledge of both periods and in general, not in particular, I do not think that there is much weight in this contention. Or, as I have already indicated, in the view that the men of the last war were more adaptable and quicker of contrivance and decision than those of the present, because of experience gained in operating the reforms, notably that of health insurance, introduced in the years before 1914.

PROCEDURES AND METHODS

So much of the men and their qualities. And now of procedures and methods.

The Civil Service tends to be conservative (using the word in its general, not its political, sense; and it is well to remember that the most ardent of radicals may be a troglodyte in business or domestic habits). In this it is no different from any big organisation which has reached years of discretion. It is lamentable that in this year of grace, 1940, with the urgencies of war taxing the country's resources to the utmost, it should be necessary at the instance of the Prime Minister to ask that, wherever practicable, consultation should be by word of mouth not by written minutes, that where minutes are written they should contain definite proposals, not just a statement of pros and cons (a practice, one had hoped, as dead at least as Queen Anne), and that there should be the fullest practicable delegation of functions. These condemned practices have about them the musty smell of mid-Victorian leisure, dignity and propriety when it was considered that even a minor departmental letter required the signature of at least a parliamentary secretary. I was told by an elderly colleague in my early days that one of his daily duties had been to carry a chin-high pile of letters to that worthy for his signature, and he still chuckled over the commotion when one day he stumbled and the contents of the Olympian pile cascaded over the room.

Appeal has also been made for simpler and more direct language instead of the trappings of "officialese," and these also are of mid-Victorian lineage, when even children had to lisp in stilted phrases. Its survival in the Civil Service (though not there alone) is an interesting study, to be explained by much more than just tradition and stupidity. Some wits have blamed the soaking in the classics enjoyed, or endured, by many of those who have held the highest posts, but in practice stilted officialese is more the bane of the lower than of the higher ranks. My counsel to those who suffered from the disease was to write just as they would talk to the correspondent if he were in their room, but as briefly as may be. It would be a pleasant discipline to put the persistent offender through a course

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of, say, Hume or Huxley: I omit Berkeley, the most charming of all, because he has a touch too delicate for the daily Civil Service. One of the most interesting official writers who came my way, an excellent civil servant full of practical common sense, was a former Army officer who entered the Service by patronage. He could quote Shakespeare by the bucket, and rarely missed an apt quotation which usually gave light as well as delight.

But this is a diversion. The practices which have been officially urged materially conduce to efficiency as well as despatch. Settlement of issues by the spoken instead of the written word should do so because issues are more thoroughly thrashed out: moreover, conferences are about the best means of education, chiefly for juniors but often also for seniors, and they are particularly useful for bringing together the views and the outlook of lay administrators and professional experts. Their benefits radiate far beyond the immediate issues to be settled. But the practice can be unbearably wasteful unless conferences are kept strictly to the point (they can easily meander into minor matters and irrelevances) and unless there is abundant delegation so that they are held only on issues of broad import or of exceptional difficulty. As a normal practice of daily work they require also that the staff shall be bunched together in suitable location so that too much time is not spent in coming and going: this is one of the special difficulties of war-time, the pressure on accommodation often making it impossible to house staff in desirable proximity.

The most important measure of all is delegation, and still more delegation. There is culpable waste of ability, as well as of time and money, where this is not practised, as well as loss of efficiency. Moreover, the effective ability of men cannot be truly tested unless they are given the opportunities of responsible work, and not to afford these opportunities is unfair to men in the lower ranks. Theoretically there is a marshal's baton in every knapsack, but in practice a man in the lower ranks too often has little chance of proving his capacity for high posts until he has nearly grown grey in the Service. There is a big reservoir of high potential ability at the lower as well as at the higher levels, but much of it remains potential because not tapped in the early years of service. Several years ago I told an international conference of business men that in this country the question was not whether the public services were not attracting a sufficient proportion of native ability but whether they were not attracting too much, and I think that still remains true. I used to tell young men of exceptional promise to take as much responsibility as they could obtain and, in an aside, to snatch still more. Quite apart from prospects, the able thus obtained much more "kick" out of their work, just as a boy of mettle much prefers to ride a horse of spirit.

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There are ways, too, by which much more use can be made of the average man, by giving him tools which are easily within his compass. A practice which I found very useful, especially during the last war when highly controversial work had to be carried out with a small staff, some of it not of much experience, was to have memoranda prepared on subjects of frequent enquiry, each memorandum dealing with a subject of as limited scope as was practicable, but comprehensively and concisely with that and in simple wording. The appropriate memorandum was then sent to the enquirer, with that part answering his enquiry clearly marked, and an appropriate covering letter which looked as though it had been specially typed for the occasion.

The practice had many advantages. The subject was more thoroughly considered than if each enquiry had been dealt with on its own, while the preparation of the memoranda was an education for the staff. Replies could be sent quickly and with a big saving of time for the staff, and the answering could be left to more junior men and women: the worst mistake they could commit was to send the wrong memorandum or to mark the wrong part. The enquirer was helped because an answer confined to his immediate enquiry might well have misled him, just as a phrase out of its context is often misconstrued, and in any event he understood the subject much better if he were led to read the whole memorandum, a matter of importance where, as in our case, a large proportion of our enquirers were persons or bodies who had to advise others.

I have already mentioned that one of the biggest gains from a wide delegation is that principal officers are given more time for considering general problems. It is not unfair to say that many officers even in high posts are inclined to busy themselves too much with day-to-day questions and to neglect thinking well ahead, and even those who are keenly alive to the need of forethought are apt to find themselves overwhelmed with the travail of the moment. This is especially so in times of pressing emergency, the very time when it is most important to look ahead, as well as dealing with the trouble on the doorstep. The good servant must deal with these, but he is but of minor profit if in the much busy-ness of the moment he neglects the long vision.

The one measure which would probably produce the biggest quick profit in increased efficiency would be the establishment of a comprehensive personnel department for the whole service. The present staff department of the Treasury does not fill the bill. It is much more a policeman than a guardian, more concerned to see that money is not spent on staff unless clearly needed than to secure that the

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highest efficiency is obtained throughout the departments (and adequately equipped for the purpose), though the latter is the only way of true economy. It busies itself much more with numbers and classes and grades and rates of pay of staff than with organisation, methods and the like.

The importance of personnel management is of comparatively recent development, a consequence of the increased size and complexity of many businesses and the much less personal touch between heads of businesses and the staff. It is a development which runs parallel with the more varied equipment of modern big business, though as usual lagging far behind because the human material is the least tractable; there are tens of organised research groups into things for each one into men. Big advances in personnel management have been made in some quarters in recent years, more than enough to convince any open mind, but there is still wide ignorance and a good deal of scepticism of its value. The position to-day is just like that which prevailed a few years ago (and unfortunately still prevails in many quarters) in the matter of comprehensive costing. Taking big business as a whole it is doubtful whether more advance has been made there than in the Civil Service.

A stronger case, however, can be made out for the highest standard of personnel and efficiency management in the Civil Service even than in big business in general because of the enormous spread of its operations, the complexity of its services and the greater ease with which departments and men can slide down to a level of mediocre performance. A personnel department would scrutinise expenditure on staff no less closely than to-day, would indeed scrutinise it much more effectively, but do so as part of its general watch over efficiency. Its methods would be as much above present practice as are the modern tests of medical practice above those of the old ways of diagnosis.

What is wanted is a small department staffed with men highly skilled in matters of personnel management (which is by no means every able man's meat: but faddists should be eschewed, though they can be quite useful—outside), exercising supervision throughout the whole Service, acting chiefly by advice and counsel though with the right to enforce in the last resort. It should not interfere more than needful with the staff management of the several departments, and should leave them with abundant discretion, should, indeed, encourage their initiative and that of heads of divisions and sections right throughout the Service, because these are birds which may lay golden eggs, trying new methods which provide a big pool of experiment that will constitute for the personnel department at the centre a treasure of proven experience.

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There is little doubt that in this way surprising advances could be made in a few years. A big advance could be made at once if the best practices and methods in the several departments (and there is a mixture of good and mediocre in most) were applied all round where they would be suitable. Not that there should be any attempt at rigid uniformity, on the contrary that is a danger against which to guard; results should be the criterion, not just the form.

The foregoing suggests the last subject with which I shall deal here. An interesting sixpenny "Penguin" has recently been published on *Science in War*. It makes a strong demand for more use of scientific experts in the various spheres of governmental activity. It criticises present practice, alleges that experts are usually asked for advice only on specific problems put to them, and are not encouraged, much less helped, to investigate in general the whole field of their expertise for the discovery of better means of prosecuting the war, improving health and physique, using the land to better purpose, and the like.

Experts, even the best of them, are princes in a very limited kingdom. They are apt to see through a microscope those matters which are their concern and through the wrong end of a telescope those which are not. Like specialists of all kinds, they do not as a rule excel in sense of proportion, it is an almost inevitable penalty of their very excellence.

They are apt also to be more categorical than knowledge really warrants. The story during the last half-century of the creeds of the experts on, for instance, dietaries is calculated to make the most stalwart of believers into hardened sceptics. The "certainties" of science are much less certain in some fields than in others, in health and dietary, for instance, than in physics. Even in those which seem most certain, the prudent expert will be chary of categorical imperatives, for one thing is sure, that what is unknown exceeds beyond comprehension what is known, and that the known may at any time be upset by some new discovery in the vast territory of the unknown. Those who would dictate our diets, for instance, are apt to forget how short a time vitamins have been raised on their altars.

A kingdom ruled by experts would compete in futilities and comicalities with that governed by the philosophers of Plato—or with the modern extremist devotees of "planned economy." The former Lord Salisbury (himself no mean scientist) is said to have declared that one of the chief lessons of experience is not to trust the experts and that their strong wine needs to be diluted by a large mixture of common sense. There are probably few men versed in public affairs

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who would not endorse the general sentiment. This is far from saying that an expert may not be an able administrator, but that is not because he is an expert. Further, as one who had for many years to work with and largely depend on professional advisers, I can conceive no one in the like position who would not express the highest appreciation of, and gratitude for, their services.

The question is not by any means so clear as might be imagined after reading *Science in War*. Yet in substance the general charge which it makes still stands. It would be going much beyond the facts to say that the expert is still suspect in government departments, not that there is not still a whiff of suspicion, partly due to some experts themselves who are inclined to claim a larger province than is their due as experts. It is not a question of pay, indeed the lay administrator may come off second-best, nor of status, though this is not wholly absent, but of a clearer understanding by expert and administrator of the place, and the necessity, of each in public administration. We are much nearer that understanding to-day than in the earlier days of my service, and we shall be much nearer still if each can get within the skin of the other and see his standpoint.

It is possible that the services of the expert would meet with more appreciation in the Civil Service if science had played a larger part in the education of the administrative classes, though this is by no means certain. On the whole, the civil servant is still disposed to look upon administration as an art, which depends on personal aptitude and practice (as it unquestionably does in large measure), with little of the "scientific" about it and little to be gained for its advancement by study and research of procedure and methods and the results of different ways of getting things done. The general attitude is illustrated by the small proportion of eligible persons who are members of our own Institute. They have the excuse that much of what passes for "administrative science" is little more than superficial generalisations, but that at best is not more than an excuse, the real reason lies deeper.

It is little appreciated, again speaking in general and recognising many exceptions, that high as is the present general standard of administration there is ample room for advances, and urgent need if we are adequately to meet the calls of the more recent functions undertaken by governments (and, still more, those in the offing), such as those relating to health and unemployment, functions which demand as much more knowledge and skill than of yore as does the financial management or engineering of to-day than those of fifty years ago. There has been in recent years no comparable advance in public administration as achieved (largely through their association) by, for instance, municipal treasurers.

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We badly need in public administration the spirit which produced the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Medical Research Council. Organised research in public administration, in all its spheres, may produce marvels comparable with those achieved in these spheres. It is high time we set about the work, even though it be the inveterate tendency of man to try reforming all things before himself and his ways.

There is, of course, behind all this an even greater problem, tragically illustrated by the present titanic struggle of war—whether, and how, man can match the fertility of his discoveries and inventions in material things with a similar fertility in the adaptation of himself and his institutions to the new conditions, or whether he must stay the pace of his mastery over the material to the slower progress of himself, in his character, outlook and habits. It must suffice here to say that it seems doubtful whether the slackening of the pace of advances in the material world is possible without reverting to a lower level of civilisation, which would happen if Hitler and his crowd were victorious, and that, if freedom is to prevail, man can scarcely resist the challenge of his opportunities and must labour to find means by which the pace of advance in his own make-up, in the individual and in the group, shall keep reasonable step with that of his material conquests. This is one of the basic crises of our civilisation.

The sum of all which is this. The raw material of the Civil Service is in general of high quality, but better use can be made of it. Substantial advances have been achieved in organisation and methods, but there are too many survivals of old-fashioned ways. There are avoidable differences in efficiency between different parts of the Service. The demand for superseding civil servants by business men is silly, but even in normal times of peace there are functions where their help and counsel are invaluable, while in the colossal expansion of "business" services in time of war a large infiltration of business men becomes essential, to supplement, not to supersede, the Civil Service, the two working in close partnership for the solution of the many problems and the provision of the many needs.

The one measure which would produce the quickest improvements in the Civil Service is the establishment of a comprehensive and well-staffed personnel department for the whole of it. A big gain would be secured simply by bringing the less efficient parts of the Service in procedure and methods up to the level, or near the level, of the best. Lastly, provision for systematic and continuing research may well produce advances comparable with those which in this way have been won in industry and in medicine, if man, including the public administrator, would recognise that he and his ways are fully as fit objects of study as atoms and gases, as metals and the stars.

The Administration of Food Distribution in War-time—II

By RICHARD N. SPANN, B.A. (Oxon)

Supply

THE Supply Department of the Ministry of Food has its own internal problems. Its control branches have frequently to engage in the unfamiliar activity of purchasing and selling on a wide scale, in addition to regulating distribution. Machinery of varying degrees of complication has been evolved to deal with different commodities—it is most elaborate in the case of meat and livestock control, which will be described in some detail below.

Fortunately, the department has had the experience of 1917-20 on which to draw, and that gained during the period of collective intervention in marketing since 1933. In the last war, as Sir William Beveridge writes, "complete unity of food control was never achieved."¹ Sugar, wheat, and—for a time—oils and fats, remained the responsibility of other bodies. In the present war the Ministry of Food has been able to build up its supply organisation much more quickly and comprehensively than was possible then. We have grown more accustomed to State intervention in private trade, and the State more experienced at intervening effectively. The food trades have become more highly integrated, and hence easier to handle by a central authority. Lastly, one important difference between the situation in 1917 and that in 1939 may be mentioned, which can be viewed either as a hindrance or as a help to the present Ministry's activities—few serious shortages on the side of supply have occurred.

There was reason to hope then, before the outbreak of war, that the extended and difficult period of transition before control experi-

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enced in 1914-18 would be avoided this time, though expectations have been partly disappointed in this respect. The early measures of control introduced by the new Ministry in 1939 did not, as a whole, work very smoothly. Requisitioning and dispersal of stocks was carried on rather haphazardly. Fish control and a scheme for decentralising London meat marketing broke down. A margarine pooling scheme was introduced and then withdrawn. A provisional plan for the control of meat and livestock was ended in December. Rationing was continually postponed,² while, in its absence, the inequitable device of "unofficial rationing" became notorious.

After January, 1940, however, the Ministry of Food passed into smoother waters; and the general outlines of control have not changed much since then. The department has become the sole importer of the main foodstuffs, though a few inessentials are still controlled only by import licensing (which, though the task of the Board of Trade, is operated through the Ministry of Food so far as food is concerned). Certain home-produced commodities are also purchased on its behalf by its agents, including livestock, sugar, and most butter. In every case except meat control, the department intervenes only at the first stage in the distributive process and sells to private wholesalers, while the co-operation of traders is fully secured in the working of the controls themselves. The hand of the department continues to be felt, even when it is not actually engaged in buying and selling, since practically every foodstuff is controlled by Orders fixing maximum or prescribed prices, and some of the more important ones (sugar, bacon, butter, margarine, lard, tea, and meat—except for pork and some special types) are rationed. Fresh fish and fruit are almost the only foods that remain practically free of control. The department also regulates the activities of traders directly by making them secure its licence as a condition of carrying on business.

In its trading transactions, the Ministry operates as a "business" concern, and aims to cover costs,³ though in the case of particular commodities Treasury subsidies are granted to keep down prices. These occur as "losses" on the trading transactions of the department, apply to meat, wheat, bacon, milk and cheese, and have been estimated at 60 million pounds a year.⁴ The total turnover of the department has been estimated at £574 millions for the current year, of which £180 millions is accounted for by the meat scheme. What proportion of this figure represents the actual cost of the Controls' activities is unknown. The cost of the meat scheme is estimated at £27.5 millions, 15.3 per cent. on turnover, but as this includes wholesale distribution it is difficult to make comparisons for other commodities. The total figure is unlikely to be less than £50 millions and may be nearer £70 millions.

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Nor are precise figures available as to the total number employed directly on supply questions by the Ministry. In March, 1940, the area commodity organisations of the various controls employed nearly 2,600 people, and the total staff employed on supply was probably not less than 4,500, of whom more than half were concerned with meat and livestock control.

The organisation of the commodity controls cuts across the general functional organisation of the department. Up to June, 1940, about seventeen important control schemes had been planned by the Ministry.⁵ These are operated for the most part from a headquarters' section in London (though in a few cases, *e.g.*, potatoes—Oxford; canned fish—Liverpool, the head office is in the provinces). For each controlled commodity, a Trade Director has been appointed, who has executive control of the working of the scheme. In the case of meat and livestock, two Trade Directors have co-ordinate responsibility. In other cases, boards have been set up, *e.g.*, the Cereals Control Board, Sugar Control Board, the chairmen of which act as the executive heads. Financial questions are handled for each control by a Finance Director, responsible to the Financial Secretary; staff problems by a Head of Branch, responsible to the Principal Establishment Officer. Over these officials in each case there is an Assistant Secretary (usually one for every two or three controls) who is in charge of the "administrative direction"⁶ of the scheme.

The majority of the Trade Directors have been appointed from private firms engaged in peace time in the production or distribution of the commodity they are now responsible for handling; and this practice has given rise to a good deal of unfavourable comment. Some attempts have been made to contrast present methods with those adopted in the last war. Sir William Beveridge attaches the greatest importance to the policy of Lord Rhondda in recruiting his departmental heads from sources outside the particular trades controlled. "Without exception, the persons in charge of the main Divisions of the Ministry had no previous experience of the foods with which they were dealing."⁷ But here he is speaking of officials in a position corresponding to that of the present Assistant Secretaries of the Ministry, to whom the same applies—not, as seems to have been generally thought, of the Trade Directors themselves, who were—as he says—frequently drawn from the trades with which they were concerned.⁸ In fact, of 23 directors and assistant directors of important trade departments, 11 were recruited in this way. In 1940, of 25 occupying equivalent positions, 19 were recruited from the trade they controlled.⁹

The precise relationship between Assistant Secretary and Trade Director is obscure. It must vary greatly according to the personalities

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of the men and the commodity involved. In the case of complex controls like oils and fats, or meat and livestock, the Trade Directors must necessarily take many of the decisions (the former control has drawn its director and almost the whole of its subordinate staff from Lever Brothers and Unilever, Ltd.). This is no doubt also the case when the control is located outside London.¹⁰ On the other hand, the extension of State control of food supply since the last war has given many officials from the Ministry of Agriculture or who were attached to the various marketing boards and commissions, invaluable experience in dealing with the food trades that must give them an authoritative standing; and these men have been heavily drawn upon by the new department. The Select Committee on National Expenditure concludes that "The organisation, even more than before, ensures that Trade Directors receive instructions as to the Minister's policy through their Civil Service colleagues," and that "the function of the Trade Directors is no more than advisory." This certainly seems to be a misstatement of the position. Though the ultimate responsibility for major decisions may lie elsewhere, many decisions and full executive control are vested in the Trade Directors. Indeed, the peculiar talent of the businessman lies in execution (controlled in the interests of the community), and not in advice. An advisory body of traders tends to be a pressure group of interested parties rather than an agency of fruitful co-operation.

It is important in this connection, of course, to know how far the Trade Directors, where businessmen, are permitted to retain their contacts with their private interests after appointment. "It is a condition of appointment to these and subordinate posts that holders of them should not exercise executive control of any business connected with food importation, manufacture or distribution." However, though official duties come first, it is "recognised that occasional contact with their business interests may be necessary."¹¹ The Select Committee quotes the case of a trade official who "has been simultaneously with performing his official duties in the Ministry, engaged as a trade representative in negotiating . . . as regards the operating margins to be allowed to his own trade."¹²

Under the Trade Directors are assistant directors in charge of particular aspects of the commodity controlled. Thus in the case of bacon, there is a Director of Bacon Supplies, and subordinate Directors of Production, Imports and Distribution. Where the main executive decisions are in the hands of a board or committee, there may be subordinate committees. The control of cereals, for instance, is operated by a Cereals Control Board, assisted by Cereals Import, Home-Grown Cereals, and Flour Mills Control Committees. These have an interlocking membership, *e.g.*, the Chairman of the Home-

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Grown Cereals Committee serves on the Cereals Import Committee, and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Cereals Control Board are *ex-officio* officers of it.

MARKETING BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Announcements made on the outbreak of war indicated that it was proposed to absorb the staffs and machinery of most of the marketing schemes into the general mechanism of food control; and this process has in fact taken place, though more slowly than was anticipated. However, the Milk and Hops Marketing Boards, though they have been taken over by the Ministry of Food, have retained their pre-war status, and most of their more important functions.¹³ The powers of the Livestock and Sugar Commissions were vested in the food department, and their Vice-Chairman and Chairman respectively became Directors of Meat and Livestock Supplies and of Sugar Distribution (the former has since resigned). The British Sugar Corporation retains its functions and is used as an agent of the Ministry of Food in the sugar control scheme. The Bacon and Pigs Boards were replaced in October, 1939, by an emergency committee of three (including one member from each of the boards) and diminished functions were retained by this. Power to fix prices—and a large part of the staff—was immediately transferred to the Ministry. The Bacon Marketing Board's levy on curers was suspended, but those of the Pigs Boards and the Bacon Development Board were maintained (amid much protest) until December, 1939. In the latter month full control of bacon supplies was instituted by the department, and the Chairmen of the Bacon and Pigs Marketing Boards were formally appointed Directors of Bacon and Ham Supplies and of Pig Supplies, most of the remaining staffs then being absorbed. In December also, the more important powers of the Potato Marketing Board were transferred to the department, and the Chairman was appointed Director of Potato Supplies. Under the Agriculture (War Provisions) Act of February, 1940, the powers of the Wheat Commission to make deficiency payments were suspended. Its Vice-Chairman had been appointed Chairman of the Flour Mills Control Committee.

Virtually all that remains of these bodies are small emergency committees of members, appointed to clear up outstanding matters and to act as trustees of their assets. The usual provision is for a committee of three (five in the case of the Wheat Commission), and meetings of the full board have either been suspended completely or are to take place at yearly intervals.

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THE CONTROL OF FOREIGN TRADE

The regular administration of the control of private imports of both foodstuffs and other commodities is carried on by the Import Licensing Department of the Board of Trade. But the Ministry of Food has played an important and developing role as an importer on its own behalf; and, since March, 1940, applications by private importers for licences for almost all other foodstuffs have had to be made in the first instance to the Food Department.

Initially, the bulk of food imports were classed as "free" imports, and the Board of Trade restricted itself to controlling certain special categories. Certain luxuries were prohibited altogether, and others prohibited or subject to individual licence unless coming from the Empire or France. Early in 1940 the main food imports were brought into the category of goods, the import of which was subject to licence. Finally, at the end of March, the Board of Trade, at the request of the Ministry of Food, issued an order¹⁴ making all remaining foodstuffs subject to licence (with insignificant exceptions). This was in order "to unify the control of the trade in imported foodstuffs" and "to enable the Ministry (of Food) to secure a proper control."¹⁵ Certain foods were, however, simultaneously granted open general licences from all countries or from the Empire and France. From July onwards, all open general licences granted to French exports were revoked, though parts of the French Empire retained their concessions.

The placing of the principal food imports under the licensing system amounted in most cases to a prohibition of private importation. Usually it was explicitly stated that "the Ministry (of Food) had provided for centralised purchase." By June, 1940, the department had become the sole importer of, *e.g.*, feeding-stuffs, cereals, meat, sugar, bacon, butter, tea, dried fruits, and oils and fats. Licences were still granted for the private import of some other foods, but the Ministry of Food was often the principal importer of these also, and all private applications for food import licences had to be made through its controls.¹⁶ These licences are issued "by the Import Licensing Department of the Board of Trade under recommendation of the Ministry of Food."¹⁷ Hence the Overseas Purchasing Board of the Ministry of Food (which is in close touch with the separate control branches) can plan import policy as a whole, subject to the approval of the Treasury and the Ministry of Shipping. It is probably true to say that the Ministry of Food in July, 1940, was importing on its own behalf 80-90 per cent. at least of total food imports.

The department does its buying through its own trade agents

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stationed abroad or through official buying commissions, normally recruited from the trade in question. Buying contracts may be for periods as short as a week or for much longer. Most of the long-term agreements have been negotiated with Imperial countries and provide for the purchase of export surpluses (or in a few cases total supplies). These long-term agreements have been negotiated between the governments concerned. Other supplies, in particular of most commodities coming from neutral countries, are maintained by direct contracts of the department with private producers. It is in these transactions that the Ministry's agents can take most advantage of favourable price variations and of the strong bargaining position of a monopoly buyer, backed up by the Ministry of Shipping's control of freights. Most of the early contracts negotiated with neutral countries were not for long periods,¹⁸ but long-term agreements have become more common since import prices have fallen. Until the collapse of France, Anglo-French collaboration in foreign purchasing was extensive.¹⁹ The Anglo-French Co-ordinating Committee (for the purchase of raw materials) included an Anglo-French Food Executive, with a number of sub-committees containing members of the Ministries of Food and Shipping. Generally speaking, the British Ministry of Food bought for France in the British Empire and its French equivalent for Britain in the French Empire. Joint purchasing commissions were set up in the more important neutral countries.

Control over food exports is in the hands of the Export Licensing Department of the Board of Trade. Export of all important foods is prohibited except under licence, and in general the machinery is being used, on the instructions of the food department, to preserve essential stocks within the country. An export "drive" has, however, taken place in the case of cocoa, where a large surplus has been accumulated.

CONTROL OF MEAT AND LIVESTOCK

The meat and livestock control scheme has certain features peculiar to itself which merit closer examination. These arise from the nature of the product, which, as well as being highly perishable and involving special arrangements for slaughtering, is subject to great variations of type and quality, which make the problem of allocation²⁰ (once the free movement of prices has been suspended) a peculiarly difficult one. These and other circumstances have led to the building-up of an elaborate organisation, in which considerable reorganisation of the first stages of distribution has taken place, and the department's direct control extends right up to the retail stage. Maximum prices are fixed throughout.

When the control branch was first established it had a single Director. But, early in 1940, he was replaced by his two deputies,

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who exercise joint control as Directors of Livestock and Home-Produced Meat and of Imported Meat. Under these are departmental heads concerned with different aspects of control, working in co-operation with eight Area Meat and Livestock Officers. The majority of the headquarters' chiefs came from the meat trade itself (the others were civil servants from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Livestock Commission). The eight area officers have been selected more for their general administrative ability—they include, for instance, a stockbroker, a wine merchant, and a director of public utility undertakings. The total control staff is very large.²¹ The branch is assisted in its work by advisory bodies, *e.g.*, the Meat Manufacturers' and Retailers' Advisory Committees, and the Auctioneers' Defence Committees.

The bulk of the detailed work of meat control is carried on by the staffs of the eight areas, under the supervision of the Area Meat and Livestock Officer (whose position is not dissimilar to that of the Divisional Food Officer). He and his Deputy act as liaison officers between the principal area officials for each stage, reproducing the functions of the Directors at headquarters, and they have a wide discretion in the taking of executive decisions. In London there is no area officer, and his work is performed directly from headquarters.

The general working of the scheme is as follows:—all home-produced livestock (except bacon pigs²²) (see below, page 243) are purchased for the Ministry of Food at collecting centres. The latter are in the charge of District Chairmen of Auctioneers, who are subject to County Chairmen and to the Area Livestock Supervisor, whose authority is necessary for a farmer to change his centre, and who is responsible for totalling supplies of stock bought each week. Buying is done at prescribed prices, according to certification and grading by certifying officers and graders. All these (except the Area Supervisor) are part-time officials of the department, remunerated from an auctioneer's "pool," into which the department pays inclusive sums to cover expenses. They are recruited exclusively from the trade. The Area Supervisor is a permanent official, but "may retain some connection with his trade, provided that such outside interests do not conflict with his official duties and responsibilities."²³ Accounting is centralised on a county basis, and inspection of livestock for purposes of the scheme is performed by an inspectorate under the Area Livestock Inspector. Normal inspection for public health purposes is carried on as before by the local authorities.

The returns sent by the Area Supervisor to headquarters are related there to imports, and to the estimated demands of retail

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butchers. They indicate how much home-produced meat is required in each area, and the Area Supervisor allocates livestock to the slaughterhouses accordingly. Slaughtering is normally done by local wholesalers working for the department on a contract basis. The slaughterhouse managers are responsible through County Slaughterhouse Agents to the Area Slaughterhouse Agent (there is an average of 100 slaughterhouses in each area). Independent County Slaughterhouse Tribunals have been established to report on the adequacy of existing accommodation.

Meat imports are also purchased by officials of the department (in the country of origin). Control at this end is exercised by Port Meat Agents, who are employees of the Meat Importers' National Defence Association, acting as agents of the Ministry. The detailed work of allocating meat from the slaughterhouses and ports to the distribution depots (normally in close proximity to the slaughterhouses) is done by eight Area Wholesale Meat Traders' Associations, again acting as agents of the department. The task is under the executive control of "an employee of the association who has severed his connection with the trade,"²⁴ the Area Wholesale Meat Distribution Officer. The staff employed on this work is paid by the wholesalers' associations out of a commission on turnover allowed by the department.²⁵

Transport to the distribution depots is handled, under the instructions of Area Forwarding Officers, by the railways, or, where road transport is used, by the Wholesale Meat Transport Association, another trade association acting as the Ministry's agents. The forwarding officer works in conjunction with Port Food Movement Officers, who are responsible for handling imports. The transport association, however, has no monopoly, and private hauliers may quote for the work. Once the meat has reached the distribution depots, it is left to the retailers' discretion whether they make further use of the Ministry's agents or organise "pooling" schemes of their own.²⁶ The various meat transport interests and officials have formed local advisory committees to discuss common problems.

At the distribution depots the meat passes out of the Ministry's hands, and is bought at prescribed prices by the Retailers' Buying Committees, which represent the retail butchers of each district (and must include a co-operative representative, where there is a co-operative meat trader in the district). These frequently cover the same areas as the local Food Control Committees, but in the larger urban areas there are usually several retailers' committees to each local food office (*e.g.*, Manchester, 6; Nottingham, 4). In these cases the committees may be supplemented by special advisory bodies representing all the traders in the urban area. Their expenses are paid by a

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percentage levy on retailers' accounts. The work of these committees is supervised by Deputy and Area Meat Agents, and by the local Food Offices. There are eighteen Area Meat Agents, in areas corresponding to those of the Divisional Food Officers, with whom they maintain close contact. The Deputy Meat Agents are attached to the areas of the retailers' committees, and maintain a similar contact with the local Food Offices. The individual butcher supplies to his committee an indent of supplies required, checked in accordance with rationing regulations by the local Food Office. This is passed on through the Deputy to the Area Meat Agent, who supervises the issue of "buying permits," and deals with the complaints of butchers with regard to allocations. The Deputy Meat Agents also act as local arbitrators when differences arise between retailers.

The retailers' committees have elected from among themselves Allocation Committees,²⁷ which (either themselves, or through paid allocators) divide the supplies bought between individual butchers. The Buying Committees are expected to pay weekly for purchases, and their Chairman is personally responsible for any failure to settle accounts (the Committee may make what terms it likes with individual butchers). Once meat is placed at the disposal of the allocators, it becomes the retailers' committee's responsibility to dispose of it, and if consumers fail to take up amounts estimated by retailers, they must bear the loss.²⁸

Special arrangements have been made for manufacturers of meat products and for the disposal of by-products. For the former, a special allocation is made by the Director of Manufactured Meats, administered in the different areas by the Meat Agents. Hides and skins are distributed through registered markets by an association of traders acting as agents of the department. A special scheme also exists for animal fats.

OTHER CONTROL SCHEMES

No other commodity is subject to such elaborate control as meat. But in a considerable number of cases the appropriate branch of the Ministry engages in buying and selling and, as we have seen, the private importer has been almost eliminated. On the whole, such activities have been a centralising addition to the normal peace-time structure of distribution, and the ordinary wholesale and retail trader has not been superseded. However, they are usually subject to licensing, and the fixing of prices and margins and the introduction of rationing have radically altered the nature of the services they render to the public. Margins have, on the whole, been calculated, as Sir William Beveridge has said they were in the last war,²⁹ "so as to allow

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all those hitherto legitimately in the trade to continue their activities." In addition, traders have been given an important part in the working of the controls themselves.

Some of the headquarters' sections in charge of particular foods are quite large (in several cases employing more than 300 persons), but the limitation of direct control to the first stage of distribution means that area commodity staffs are normally small. A single area executive or distribution officer, aided perhaps by a committee³⁰ and a relatively small staff, is the most that any other commodity besides meat has been found to need. The organisation of the more important schemes is discussed below.

The most extensive degree of control is to be found in the case of groceries and provisions, *e.g.*, bacon, butter, sugar, tea, cocoa, dried fruits. In all these cases the whole or the bulk of the product is purchased by the Ministry and released by it to the wholesale trade. Prices are, in nearly all cases, fixed at all stages; and the more important foods in this group are rationed.

Bacon.—Directors of Bacon and Ham Supplies and of Pig Supplies have been appointed (the former was the Chairman of the Bacon Marketing Board and the latter of the Pigs Marketing Board, the powers of both of which have been suspended, and the former Director was also connected with various bacon companies). The subordinate staff has also been mainly drawn from the Marketing Boards and the trade. Advisory committees, *e.g.*, the Bacon Distribution Advisory Committee and the Pigs Advisory Committee, have been established. In January, 1940, the control branch was the next largest after that for meat.

Pig producers have the choice of sending their stock to collecting centres under the meat scheme or of selling directly to licensed curers, in which case the transactions are regulated by Area Pig Allocation Officers of the Department.³¹ The Ministry of Food buys all imports. The bacon is then sold through the Bacon Importers' National (Defence) Association Ltd., a trade organisation acting as agent of the Ministry. Their officials, the eighteen Area Bacon Distribution Officers (in areas corresponding to those of the Divisional Food Officers), are responsible for licensing, and selling to, wholesalers. Allocations are determined at prescribed prices according to the requirements of retailers under the rationing scheme, through the buying permits issued by the local Food Office. Maximum retail prices have been fixed. Some attempt has been made to rationalise the trade by standardising cuts and confining licences to the larger curers.

Butter.—The Director of Butter (and Cheese) Supplies and his assistants have nearly all been appointed from the trade, as in the case

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of bacon. The bulk of butter supplies are purchased by the Ministry of Food and maximum prices fixed at all stages for a single grade of "National" butter. ("Farmhouse" butter is exempted from these provisions.) The butter purchased from abroad and from licensed manufacturers is disposed of through selling agents of the department, the "No. 1 Suppliers," recruited from the trade, who release it through the ordinary wholesale markets.

Sugar.—Home-produced sugar has been regulated and sold through the British Sugar Corporation and the Sugar Commission since 1936. No substantial changes have taken place in this field. Imports are bought through the Ministry of Food, and the Director of Sugar Supplies and his subordinate staff have been recruited from the Sugar Commission and the trade.

Tea.—A Director of Tea Supplies and a Tea Control Committee have been established, both recruited from the trade. The department buys all imports and allocates it through its agents in a reduced number of grades. It was proposed in 1939 to introduce a single brand of "National Control Tea," but the scheme was dropped. There is a levy on distributors to cover the expenses of the control scheme.

Dried Fruits and Cocoa.—These two controls have a largely common staff. The Director of the latter is a member of the trade. The Ministry of Food is the sole importer of both commodities. Neither is rationed, and stocks are distributed to registered dealers on the "datum period" principle. For the former a pooling scheme has been introduced and maximum wholesale and retail prices fixed for one grade of each fruit.

Oils and Fats.—A Director of Oils and Fats Supplies has been appointed from the firm of Lever Brothers, and the majority of his assistants come from the same concern, the rest being recruited from other firms in the trade. For margarine there is a special Director of Margarine Supplies. The commodities with which this control is concerned are nearly all imported (by the Ministry of Food). Home-produced animal oils and fats pass into the Ministry's hands at the Government slaughterhouses. The use of oils and fats for other than human and animal foods is prohibited except under special licence, with certain exceptions. Manufacture and trading may be carried on only under licence, with allocations made through agents of the department (*e.g.*, the Area Cooking-Fats Distribution Officers). However, butchers may produce edible tallow (dripping) freely for sale, and distribution of raw fats from the slaughterhouses to the fat melting industry for the same purpose is carried on with the assistance of eight local advisory committees of fat melters, under the supervision of a central advisory committee.³²

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In the case of margarine an attempt at pooling early in the war broke down and the Director resigned.³³ Since then rationing has been introduced for margarine and lard, and a new margarine pooling scheme launched.

Less extensive direct control has been established over other commodities, though in various ways the department has managed to intervene effectively without at any stage owning all the foodstuff in question.

Cereals.—A Cereals Control Board³⁴ has been set up, with subordinate committees to deal with imports, home-production, and flour mills control. These have an interlocking membership, and have been recruited mainly from the Wheat Commission and the larger firms in the trade. Imports are bought by the Ministry and released to the trade through seven Port Area Grain and Port Area Feeding-stuffs Committees, appointed by the department. But although certain domestic stocks were requisitioned at the beginning of the war, in general the Ministry has left these in private hands. However, all registered growers of wheat must sell it only to approved buyers, either millers or merchants authorised under the Wheat Act, and in prescribed proportions for human and animal food. Control of all flour mills is vested in the Flour Mills Control Committee, and though existing millers have been allowed to carry on their work, production of flour may be regulated at will, and the millers work to fixed margins, as both wheat and flour prices are fixed. Normally they are restricted to producing a single type of "National straight-run Flour." (See above, page 236.)

Other cereals are subject to similar regulation,³⁵ and there is little direct control of any cereal beyond the milling stage, though, *e.g.*, flour may not be used for other than human food, and types of loaf are laid down. Nor have bread sales or prices been restricted. But the Ministry of Food has taken over the Food Council's functions in this field and increases in bread prices normally do not take place without the express approval of either the headquarters' department or the Divisional Food Officers.³⁶

Feeding-stuffs.—Feeding-stuffs control is operated by a fairly small branch of the Ministry, under the charge of a civil servant from the Indian Agricultural Service. Special arrangements have been made to co-operate with the Ministry of Agriculture, and a joint advisory committee has been appointed. All imports are brought in by the Ministry of Food and released through the Port Area Feeding-stuffs Committees. Internal distribution is less controlled except in the case of wheat (see above), though dealers are regulated by licensing. In September, 1939, the merchants in each county were asked to set up small county feeding-stuffs committees to assist in

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the distribution of animal feeding-stuffs to farmers. These worked in close touch with the County Executive Committees of the Ministry of Agriculture, which have set up special sub-committees on feeding-stuffs distribution. Recently divisional animal feeding-stuffs committees (for areas corresponding to the Civil Defence regions) have been set up to assist in securing an equitable distribution. They consist of an independent chairman and representatives of the county committees, and of merchants, manufacturers, and farmers. Attached to each is a whole-time executive officer responsible to the Ministry of Food.³⁷ Maximum prices have been fixed and an attempt made to standardise mixed feeds, in order to make price control effective.

Potatoes.—The Director and staff of the Potato Control have been recruited almost wholly from the Potato Marketing Board. A scheme was proposed at the beginning of the war which would have involved the marketing of "pooled" potatoes through centralised depots, but it was never brought into force, and (like other vegetables) potatoes have been subject to little more control than that exercised in peace time. Indeed, it was stated in March, 1940, that "the staff used . . . is less in numbers and in cost than that of the Potato Marketing Board." Merchants and retailers are subject to licensing but to no other restrictions. The kind of control exercised is, in fact, similar in character to that which existed before the war—the danger still being that of a surplus, not of a shortage. A levy has been imposed on wholesalers to form an insurance fund against this possibility, minimum growers' prices have been fixed as well as maximum prices at all stages, and the department has set up potato processing factories, the products of which are to be marketed through ordinary trade channels. Nine Divisional Staff Officers of the Potato Section have been appointed to direct the enforcement of these regulations.

Milk.—In the same way milk supplies have been subject to little extra regulation as a result of war-time conditions. The main effect of the war has been to speed up the provision contemplated in peace time for increasing milk sales to special classes of the community. A National Milk Scheme has been undertaken to organise the supply of milk free or at a reduced cost in special cases. The divisional and local Food Offices have co-operated in this, and the latter have appointed milk officers. The other main development which has taken place is an attempt to rationalise distribution. The milk industry and the Ministry of Food have both set up committees, the latter under Lord Perry, which have reported on this subject.³⁸

Although the Chairman of the Milk Marketing Board has been given the title of Director of Milk Supplies, the Board (and the Central Milk Distributive Committee) have retained most of their peace-time functions.

Administration of Food Distribution in War-time

Transport and Storage.—The special scheme for meat transport is described elsewhere. Apart from this, inland transport of foodstuffs has been left relatively undisturbed. A Director of Food Transport (an ex-member of the firm of Lever Brothers) has been appointed, and there are Assistant Divisional Food Transport Officers attached to the Divisional Food Offices, but these had not by the middle of 1940 undertaken any extensive reorganisation.³⁹ Such modifications as have taken place in road food transport arrangements have arisen as a result of petrol rationing. Agreement has been reached with the military authorities that food vehicles will not (save in exceptional circumstances) be requisitioned for military purposes. The divisional officers work in close touch with the petroleum officers, and play a large part in the detailed administration of fuel rationing to food hauliers, who have been, in common with other road transport operators, organised into groups for rationing purposes.

Up to the outbreak of war, little special provision had been made with regard to food stocks, except for wheat, whale oil and sugar (of which purchases on Government account had been made), and for purposes of the evacuation scheme. Since September, 1939, a policy of building-up and decentralising food stores has been followed, and a Director of Cold Storage appointed, who has planned a 10 per cent. increase in cold storage capacity.⁴⁰ The scheme has been dovetailed so far as possible with the general distribution arrangements. Since the Ministry handles most foods at some stage, it has been able to regulate outgoings at its distribution depots in accordance with storage requirements, and has been able to assemble large food stocks at main and "buffer" depots in 800 different sub-areas. The security of these is supervised by the divisional and local Food Offices. This policy can clearly only be carried out to the fullest extent in the case of commodities (*e.g.*, most provisions and canned goods) which are fairly easy to store. The extent and location of existing specialised accommodation for other foods limits the department's plans.

¹ British Food Control, p. 53.

² Rationing was expected on the outbreak of war, but postponed because of the decision to base it on the National Register. The end of October was then given as a provisional date. On 1st November the Minister indicated mid-December as the probable time, but by the middle of the month had decided once more on postponement—until 8th January, 1940, when it was finally introduced for bacon, butter and sugar.

³ Cf. Commons Debates, V. 353, 90, referring to cereals control. Expenses may be covered by profits on trading, or, as in the case of tea, by a levy on distributors.

⁴ By the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Budget Speech (Commons Debates, V. 360, 85, 23rd April, 1940).

⁵ One of these—Fish Control—had broken down before the end of September, 1939. But there were still some sixty persons employed in winding-up the scheme in June, 1940.

⁶ Commons Debates, V. 353, 82.

⁷ British Food Control, p. 66.

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- ⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 68.
- ⁹ Cf. App. III, 4th Report, Select Committee on National Expenditure.
- ¹⁰ This applied in only one or two cases before June, 1940. Since then considerable decentralisation has taken place.
- ¹¹ Commons Debates, V. 352, 1940. (The Minister of Food.)
- ¹² Fourth Report, p. 29.
- ¹³ The General Manager of the Milk Marketing Board has been given the post of Director of Milk Supplies at the Ministry of Food.
- ¹⁴ Import of Goods (Prohibition) (No. 12) Order, 1940.
- ¹⁵ *Board of Trade Journal*, 28th March, 1940, p. 335.
- ¹⁶ See *Board of Trade Journal*, 28th March, 1940, p. 335, where it was announced that "enquiries and applications for import licences should in future be addressed to the Ministry of Food . . . in respect of all foodstuffs" (with inconsiderable exceptions).
- ¹⁷ *Board of Trade Journal*, 6th June, 1940, p. 543. cf. 4th Report, Select Committee on National Expenditure, p. 16.
- ¹⁸ Import prices were abnormally high in the first weeks of the war (cf. Commons Debates, V. 357, 541-2).
- ¹⁹ See *The Times*, 27th February, 1940.
- ²⁰ And rationing, which is not here described in detail. The important point is that meat is rationed by *value*, other foodstuffs by *amount*.
- ²¹ By the middle of 1940, it was probably not less than 2,500.
- ²² See above, p. 243.
- ²³ Commons Debates, V. 258, 1169-70.
- ²⁴ Commons Debates, V. 357, 39.
- ²⁵ Four per cent. for the first three months of control (Commons Debates, V. 357, 775-6). The Minister has said (*ibid.*, V. 358, 17) that he is "not in possession of detailed information as to the names and salaries of their staff."
- ²⁶ The large majority have chosen the former procedure. In some cases, however, e.g., Manchester and Birmingham, an Abattoir Transport Pool has been established, composed of the vehicles of local butchers and carriers, managed by a specially appointed transport officer.
- ²⁷ Birmingham appears to be unique in that there no allocation committees have been established, allocation to individual retailers being done by the local Wholesale Meat Supply Association.
- ²⁸ Cf. *Meat Trades Journal*, 21st March, 1940, p. 343.
- ²⁹ British Food Control, p. 73.
- ³⁰ In addition to the central advisory bodies concerned with different commodities, area advisory committees have been established to represent traders (e.g., Area Provisions and Groceries Advisory Committees).
- ³¹ 55 in number, and organised in general on a county basis.
- ³² The task of these is "to facilitate distribution arrangements and to secure economy in the use of local transport" (Commons Debates, V. 357, 762).
- ³³ The staff employed in the Oils and Fats Control fell from 223 in November, 1939, to 99 at the beginning of 1940 (Commons Debates, V. 355, 728, and Lords Debates, V. 115, 315-316).
- ³⁴ See above, p. 236.
- ³⁵ But no proportions between different uses have been prescribed, save in the case of wheat.
- ³⁶ The Food Council had developed a scheme in peace time for fixing a "fair" level of bread prices in relation to bakers' costs and made use of it by voluntary arrangement in the London area. At the end of September, 1939, the London Employers' Joint Price Committee of the Baking Trade Board announced that, by arrangement with the Ministry of Food, the price of bread in the London area was to be raised.
- ³⁷ Cf. Commons Debates, V. 360, 208-9.
- ³⁸ October, 1940 (H.M.S.O.).
- ³⁹ The Fourth Report of the Committee on National Expenditure expressed the view that there was room for more extensive control.
- ⁴⁰ *Financial News*, 1st June, 1940.

Administration of Food Distribution in War-time

ADDENDA TO PREVIOUS ARTICLE

(PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, July, 1940)

- P. 174, ll. 1-5.—The Minister of Food has appointed a Principal Priority Officer "whose duty it is to put forward questions relating to Priority to the Priority Sub-Committees" (*cf.* Commons Debates, V. 352, 869).
- P. 174, ll. 15-16.—The reference to a formal consultative body linking the Ministries of Food and Agriculture seems to be mistaken. According to the Prime Minister (Commons Debates, V. 359, 789, 16th April, 1940), "Close contact is . . . maintained . . . , and the necessary co-ordination of the broad lines of policy is secured through the Food Policy Committee of the War Cabinet." There is also, working under the Ministerial Economic Policy Committee, a committee of official heads of departments interested in economic policy, presided over by Lord Stamp (Commons Debates, V. 352, 29).
- P. 178, n. 40.—Regional food price investigation committees were established in September, 1940, to keep check on the prices of foodstuffs not controlled by Order. They are on similar lines to those set up for other "price-regulated" goods, and report to the Central Price Committee of the Board of Trade, which in turn reports to the Ministry of Food.
- P. 180, ll. 12-13.—By S.R. & O. 788 (1940), the Minister may provide that any local food control committee shall include one representative of organised labour.

Public Opinion Polls

By F. R. COWELL, B.A., B.Sc.Econ., Ph.D.

SIXTY years ago a now forgotten writer on "Representative Government in England," referring to "the vast assembly" of the nation as a whole, said, "Had we only the machinery for recording the votes of that assembly we might easily dispense with Parliament altogether."¹ It is not altogether fanciful to surmise that he would consider that the modern public opinion poll goes far in providing such machinery. How far, is a question that has arisen in all seriousness in the U.S.A., where it is now confidently claimed that a sufficiently accurate approximation of the "votes of that assembly" may be secured if a poll is taken of a relatively very small sample of the total electorate. So far this striking notion seems to have been amply vindicated by experience. Public opinion polls on this sample basis have a very short history. The best known of their predecessors was the straw vote of the *Literary Digest*, which came to grief with its resounding failure in predicting the overthrow of President Roosevelt at the 1936 election. It failed, despite the very large number of its voters, because they were not selected upon a representative sampling basis. In the first place they were taken from telephone directories, lists of car owners and the like, and secondly, they depended upon the post. In other words, they were overweighted in favour of the opinions of higher income groups. Subsequent public opinion polls avoid these mistakes.

NATURE OF THE SAMPLE

They are conducted by means of interviews, so overcoming the known reluctance of the lower income groups to respond to invitations to post their replies. A much more carefully chosen sample of the population is taken. The number of people interviewed is not less than 3,000, but it is rarely as high as 50,000. The poll conducted by

¹ *Representative Government in England. Its Faults and Failures.* By David Syme. 1882.

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the magazine *Fortune* has relied upon a sample of 5,200 people. This number is made up of residents in the main geographical areas of the U.S.A. selected from a balanced number of cities, small towns, and country districts, and properly blended to allow due weight to differences arising from age, sex, economic status and colour.

Any student of social science with a faith in statistical uniformities would expect this procedure, if properly conducted, to produce reasonably accurate results. Making due allowance for the inherent difficulties of the task of framing the sample and conducting and reporting the interviews, it seems that this expectation has often been realised. Scientific caution forbids a bolder claim, because there is often no method of checking the polls against the results of more comprehensive voting. The relatively small deviation of public opinion poll results from those of national elections, when they are on the same issues, has however provided quite striking evidence of similarity between the sample and the whole.

OPPOSITION TO PUBLIC OPINION POLLS

It is only to be expected that this new phenomenon in the hotly contested field of public opinion should arouse considerable interest and stimulate a corresponding controversy. A most interesting symposium has recently appeared in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*¹, in which the subject is reviewed from many angles.

It is not surprising to find, in an age critical of democratic principles, that public opinion polls have their enemies in the U.S.A. Some of the more trenchant criticism comes indeed from writers distrustful of the competence of the masses to manage the complicated affairs of a vast modern society. Pure democracy, says Colonel O. R. McGuire, of which the polls would be a legitimate development, has never succeeded whether in Ancient Greece or more recent New England. The polls will merely "elevate demagogues to power who will go to the greatest extremes in taking from those who have and giving to those who have not." In other words, they foster what John Stuart Mill spoke of as "that falsely called democracy which is really the exclusive rule of the operative classes . . . class legislation in its narrowest, and political ignorance in its most dangerous form."² Professor Robert S. Lynd founds his objection rather on public ignorance than on the rapacity of the masses, arguing that "mass conservation as regards intelligent things that must be done is irrelevant save as an object to be removed." He would like to see the polls taken among "people stratified by competence on a given problem."

¹ *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 2, June, 1940, published by the School of Public Affairs, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., U.S.A.

² *Representative Government*. 1851. P. 230.

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Thus at once do the polls raise one of the fundamental political problems of our time: how far it is possible to guide social development by intelligent planning in the light of expert knowledge which the mass of the people can but imperfectly share. The polls naturally do not impress people worried by this question and the objections take many forms. One of the most frequently heard is the alleged "band-waggon" effect of the polls; that is the facility with which hesitant voters will join what seems to be the majority party. United States Representative Mr. Walter M. Pierce emphasises this criticism, "I am convinced that voters like to climb on to the band-waggon and that polls greatly increase the band-waggon vote." The old adage that nothing succeeds like success is indeed known to have its political applications. Curiously enough, however, in several cases where some statistical check on this tendency is possible, it has noticeably failed to manifest itself.

As Mr. Gallup, Director of the American Institute of Public Opinion, points out, if there had been much in the band-waggon theory it should have come to the rescue of Mr. Landon, who was so confidently predicted by Press and straw vote alike as the future President of the U.S.A. in 1936. The reassuring truth is, according to Mr. Gallup, "that events and actions are infinitely more potent factors in influencing the formation of opinion than a mere desire to initiate one's fellow citizens."

A more penetrating view of the "band-waggon" tendency is offered by Professor Floyd H. Allport, who aptly contends that a knowledge of the opinions of one's fellow citizens is an important requirement of democracy and that the "true danger sign for democratic processes" is a lack of awareness of how others think and feel.

The "band-waggon" objection can therefore be largely if not entirely discounted. So also no doubt can the rather severe *ad hominem* objection of Professor Lynd and others, that the polls as now conducted "are in private hands for private profit" and that their directors "live and grow rich by perpetuating the public's sense of the competence of its opinions."

Such a criticism seems unfair, both because, whether good or bad, the present financial arrangements for two public opinion polls in the U.S.A. do not affect the general problem of opinion sampling which is the sociological question at issue, and because there can, on the evidence, be no proof that the public is so convinced of the competence of its opinions. In fact a refreshing feature of the polls from this point of view is the provision made for those who do not vote because they confess they do not know the right answers to the questions asked. It is not so refreshing for the believers in the competence of pure democracies however, and we shall no doubt find Professor

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Lynd seizing upon the report of one of the contributors that 52 per cent. of a representative sample frankly confessed that they did not know what a reciprocal trade treaty is, and despite the fact that the remainder thought they knew, only 8 per cent. were able to define the term correctly. This is bad news for Mr. Cordell Hull. It is true, therefore, that the public opinion polls reveal the extent of public ignorance quite as much as of public knowledge; "a genuine source of error in interpreting the poll returns therefore," says Mr. Daniel Ketz "is the assumption of a crystallised public opinion when none in fact exists." But it is no novelty nowadays to be told that the electors neither know enough about important public questions asked to give reliable and meaningful answers, nor have they sufficiently strong convictions to give stability to their answers. But these considerations are as valid against the ordinary ballot as against the polls, except in so far as the preceding election campaigns have contributed to public enlightenment, so giving a more solid basis to the results of the actual elections. The polls, of course, have no such preparatory discussion, except in so far as they deal (and many of them do) with matters of current controversy. Professor Lynd's objection that the polls take a snap judgment whereas elections presumably are more deliberate affairs would seem to have little weight in many of the questions posed—"Do you think every able-bodied man 20 years old should be made to serve in the army or the navy for one year?" "Do you think it is all right for people to solicit money for political campaigns from government employees?" "Do you approve or disapprove to-day of Roosevelt as President?" "Do you think liquor regulations in your community are too strict, not strict enough, or about right?" "Which side do you want to see win the present war?"

To complain also that the polls are significant upon the plane of propaganda rather than as a contribution to political and administrative progress is beside the mark. Possibly a skilful manipulation of sample and interviewers, and particularly of the way the questions are phrased, might open the way to some abuses. To say as one writer does that the questions are framed for their news value (since the answers are sold as a news service to editors) is not in itself a condemnation, since public questions with news value are also likely to have some social importance. There is some legitimate criticism of the presentation of some poll results which rests upon the fact that in some reports the percentage of a remainder might easily be mistaken for a percentage of a whole, of which it is often a very small part. But charges of deliberate manipulation of the polls for sinister purposes do not occur.

One of the chief difficulties, as might be expected, is the allocation

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of weight to be allowed in the sample to economic status. In the *Fortune* survey, as explained by Mr. Elmo Roper, four income groups are used:—wealthy, upper middle class, lower middle class and poor. Occasionally a separate group for Negroes is used, and more rarely still one for the very wealthy. Careful attention has obviously been given to this problem by the conductors of the *Fortune* poll.

Another main difficulty is of course the interviewing technique. The outcry against "Cooper's Snoopers" recently in this country is a reminder of the troubles awaiting a social enquirer among a nation of individualists. The United States is the home of intensive training for salesmen, and it is clear that the investigators employed by the public opinion polls get a training in method before they set forth. It is clear that they need it if they are to manage successfully the difficult task of securing the confidence and interpreting the mind of the people they question. It would be interesting to have more light on the effect on the interviewee who finds himself picked out to speak for the nation.

So far, roughly, so good. Nevertheless, as Professor Floyd Allport points out, we want more knowledge about public opinion than the polls have so far given us. It is one thing to know what people think on a given problem. There is a second dimension: how intensely do they hold their convictions? It is possible to discover something about this dimension through the poll technique. A third dimension, described as the "telic" dimension, would provide the answer to the question, what would people be prepared to do in furtherance of their convictions? On that the polls so far shed no light.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE POLLS

The constructive contribution of the polls is the main consideration, but it tends to be overlooked in the heat of the discussion to which they have given rise.

Assuming, as it seems justifiable to do, that the polls report a sufficiently close approximation to the opinions of the country as a whole, it is justifiable to regard their record of public ignorance as one aspect of their utility. Not only does such a reminder serve as a timely stimulus to politicians but it probably contributes a good deal to public instruction at the same time. People caught out by a question to which they do not know the answer are inclined to take more interest in the subject thereafter.

More positively, however, their demonstration of the inherent soundness of public opinion on dangerous topics is reassuring. Mr. Eugene Mayer, the publisher of the *Washington Post*, gives a striking instance of the steady influence of the publication of the results

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of a Gallup poll, showing that merely a negligible percentage of the population favoured the Townsend plan at a time when politicians were stricken with panic at the thought that its wildly uneconomic proposals for the lavish endowment of old age would sweep the country. The poll results provide many other demonstrations that commonsense is a widely distributed quality.

A distinct advantage of the sample poll device is its flexibility. Instead of requiring electors to give a blanket approval to a party platform they can be asked to assess separately all its many planks. Furthermore, frequent polls on the same question succeed in bringing to light the movement of opinion upon issues otherwise rarely if ever ventilated. Considerations such as these are sufficiently obvious. Any political system depending, as democracy inevitably does, upon popular suffrage cannot ignore any device which promises to reveal the nature of public opinion. As long as it is possible to trust the sampling, interviewing, and reporting machinery (and no seriously damaging criticism has yet been advanced on these grounds) it seems obvious that a flexible, economical and relatively speedy technique for discovering and reporting public opinion has now been invented.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find on the political plane that the poll results are studied, despite the distrust and resentment they arouse among the people's representatives. Mr. George F. Lewis reports the results of his attempts to discover the attitude of Congressmen to the polls. He got 117 replies, not a very large number, among whom 84 (72 per cent.) were prepared to admit that they thought the Gallup and *Fortune* polls correctly portrayed and measured public opinion *in part*. Only fifteen (13 per cent.) conceded an unqualified affirmative, so balancing the sixteen unqualified denials (14 per cent.). Further questions elicited the interesting information that while only 39 per cent. thought they themselves were influenced by the polls, 70 per cent. thought that others were. Only 24 per cent. maintained that they thought the polls without influence.

The contribution of the polls to public administration, apart from policy-making on political issues, is interestingly put by Mr. Secretary Wallace and one of his principal assistants at the Department of Agriculture. It is wholly favourable, predicting "the systematic collection of citizens' views as a future accepted function in public administration" on the ground that "continuous lines of communication, in addition to periodic elections, must be kept with the various public affected by administrative policy." Such a pronouncement obviously needs further qualification if it is not to be regarded as likely to blur the distinction between politics and administration by opening the door to the pressure of sectional interests. But as long as the questions asked do not stray from an administrative context

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into the field of national policy, it is clear that a great deal can be done to facilitate the operation of administrative schemes by finding out systematically and in advance where the shoe is likely to pinch instead of arranging that the victim should be shod by force and waiting for his subsequent howls. In pointing the way to advances in the field of national policy the polls may often show that measures which the Government may hesitate to introduce as being too far in advance of public opinion, may in fact be assured of a ready welcome. Thus the U.S. Public Health Service found that its anti-V.D. campaign had a support of nine to one when Gallup polls asked Americans whether they were in favour of Government action towards controlling venereal disease.

This, of course, is not an example of a purely administrative question. Such was, however, the question whether families on public relief would avail themselves of a system whereby they could obtain by stamps instead of by cash the surplus foods it had been decided to give them.

In all such questions, as it is well observed, it is no novelty to seek to predict public opinion as a guide to administrative action. The only difference the polls make is the opportunity they give of doing the job more accurately and thoroughly.

THE PLACE OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLS IN GOVERNMENT

Such it seems are the main factors brought out in this most interesting symposium. Others will no doubt vary the emphasis upon many of the considerations involved. To what general conclusions do they point?

It is when considered in relation to available alternatives to the polls for doing a job which it cannot be denied is worth doing that their value is most clearly apparent. Their frequency, the number of questions they can ask, the different sections of opinion they can sound, the publicity they secure, and the discussion they stimulate, are all to the good. In these respects they possess advantages in comparison with general elections, although at present they naturally do not stir public feelings or create attitudes and opinions on one or two broad issues as elections usually do.

The initiative and referendum, unknown in Great Britain but not in the U.S.A., have been long advocated to secure results which the polls can provide more economically and on the whole efficiently, although without the benefit of the prior publicity which such comprehensive devices afford. As guides to what opinion ought to be rather than what it is, the polls naturally offer no assistance. To condemn them on that score, as it has been seen some eminent

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thinkers have done, is unfair. The complexity of modern social problems justifies this distinction between the actual and the good, despite a general agreement with President Roosevelt's declared faith in "the superior ability of the whole of the voters to pass upon political and social issues, as against the exclusive ability of a small group of individuals at the top of the social structure."

That the problem is not so simple is perhaps shown by Mr. Gosnell's incorrect comparison of the polls with commissions of inquiry and departmental committees. The function of such committees is surely to discover after a patient study of the facts what opinion ought to be about a particular problem. They do not discover the opinions of small groups at the top to the exclusion of those of the whole of the voters. Here is a clue to the fallacy inherent in the notion of that Victorian writer quoted at the commencement of this paper. He had all the logic on his side. Arguing against Burke, he contended that "whatever may be the position of a representative, there is one qualification which it is absolutely indispensable he should possess. He must reflect the opinions of his constituents on all questions of public policy which come before Parliament." From this position it may seem a short step to suggesting that machinery which would faithfully record the opinions would make the representative superfluous. But a representative is not a ventriloquist's dummy. He must of course pay respectful attention to his masters' voices, but as the polls show there are issues on which his masters are dumb. They are dumb in the American as well as in the British sense of that word. Their necessary instruction can come in the only way anyone can learn: by patient inquiry and study. Too often the public must secure vicarious enlightenment through the self-improvement of its representatives. The legislative and administrative processes must generate their own light and not merely depend for guidance on the reflection of feeble beams often fitfully received from a frequently uncertain source.

We have not yet met the suggestion that it should be possible to dispense with judge and jury and to condemn or acquit the prisoner by taking a sample of "public opinion" on his alleged crime. There is a judicial aspect of legislation and administration also where polls are irrelevant.

There can, therefore, be no question of depriving legislative deliberations or administrative counsels of the responsibility for making their own decisions merely because better ways are being found for recording the judgments of the masses of people whose creatures the legislators and administrators are.

How that more efficient machinery will affect the future of popular government is an interesting speculation upon which the symposium

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in the *Public Opinion Quarterly* ventures few constructive predictions. The view of Colonel McGuire that by adopting the polls the U.S. Constitution will be sold (he does not say "down the river") for ten shekels of silver seems unnecessarily gloomy.

How will the polls influence party politics? Will a generation of electors "conditioned" politically by constant polls confirm or upset the view that every new-born prospective voter is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative, and that he never changes his natural endowment? Will the polls help the government in power to retain public favour and will they set up a new generation of political trimmers? Is a national regulation of the polls desirable and, if so, what form should it take? To these and other questions which the new phenomenon of scientific public opinion sampling presents, much thought will inevitably be given, which in no short space of time may make many of our present uncertain and halting conclusions look not a little ridiculous.

The editors of the *Public Opinion Quarterly* meanwhile deserve the gratitude of all students of politics and government for their timely presentation of a series of studies which serve, if not to provide any very startling novelties, at any rate to place in a better perspective a technique which has aroused a great deal of unreasoning opposition, possibly some exaggerated hopes, but which gives, in spite of timid fears or rash confidence alike, some real foundation for the belief that democracy will successfully evolve the measures necessary for its survival.

The Administration of Air Raid Precautions¹

[An extract from a Research Report, Part 2, made under the auspices of the Oxford University War-time Research Committee.]

By MAY L. DHONAU, B.A.

*Scheme-making: Procedure by Stages: General Administrative Principles:
Financial Procedure: Regional Control.*

SCHEME-MAKING

GENERAL instructions on the making of air raid precautions schemes were first given to local authorities in a circular issued by the Home Office on 28th March, 1938. These instructions were subsequently amplified by the drawing up of a model scheme and further directions on the stages in which a scheme could be prepared. In this way a framework was provided for the organisation of A.R.P.

Schemes have to be divided into three parts, the first containing general provisions, the second, regulations, and the third, arrangements for mutual assistance. Part one must show who is the chief executive officer charged with the co-ordination of preparations connected with the scheme, and also the officers responsible for carrying out the provisions relating to the different services. The model scheme makes the Town Clerk, or Clerk to the County Council, the Chief Executive Officer, and places the casualty services under the Medical Officer of Health, rescue and demolition services and decontamination under the Engineer, and the Air Raid Wardens'

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Service under the Chief Constable respectively, although there is no absolutely fixed rule in the matter.

Part one must further state which officers will be responsible for seeing that schedules of stores and equipment, required for the various parts of the scheme, are prepared and that such stores and equipment are either provided or earmarked. (This does not apply to stores and equipment supplied by the Government.) In explanation it should be said that local authorities have the right, under the Civil Defence Act, of earmarking vehicles, appliances and premises for use in an emergency, which process is officially termed "designation." The ambulances of the local authority, for instance, for purposes of the Act, will be in part its own property and in part privately owned vehicles which have been earmarked and adapted for the purpose. Vehicles used for drawing trailer-pumps under the auxiliary fire schemes are sometimes tradesmen's vans which are put to their normal use except when an air raid is in progress.

Finally, it must be stated which officer or officers will be in charge of the carrying out of works under the scheme. Where the area of the local authorities is sub-divided for purposes of a scheme, this should be stated and a map of the area with its sub-divisions attached.

Regulations under the scheme fall under seventeen heads. As these regulations show, better than anything else, the matters to which air raid general precautions (as distinct from fire) schemes apply, it is worth while enumerating them as briefly as possible. They concern:—

1. Instructions and advice to the public.
2. Information and warning of air raids.
3. Reports of casualties and damage.
4. Organisation of Air Raid Wardens:—
 - (i) Number of posts required.
 - (ii) Number and size of reliefs at each post.
 - (iii) Number of groups into which Wardens are organised, each under a Head Warden, all under the control of the Chief Warden: position of Headquarters of Chief Warden.
5. Casualty Services:—
 - (i) Position of Headquarters in an emergency of First Aid Commandant.
 - (ii) Number of First Aid Posts, requirements as to personnel.

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- (iii) Depots upon which First Aid Parties to be based.
 - (iv) Points at which First Aid Posts will be established.
 - (v) Number of persons required for First Aid Posts, and reserves.
 - (vi) Casualty Clearing Stations.
 - (vii) Organisation of Ambulance and Transport Services.
6. Rescue Parties, demolition and clearance of debris:—
- (i) Position of Headquarters in an emergency of Superintendent of Rescue Parties.
 - (ii) Numbers of Rescue Parties and Demolition Gangs and depots upon which they are based.
 - (iii) Provision of necessary transport.
 - (iv) Personnel required.
7. Gas detection.
8. Decontamination Services (other than foodstuffs and clothing):—
- (i) Position in an emergency of the Headquarters of the Superintendent of Decontamination.
 - (ii) Numbers of Decontamination Squads and Depots upon which they are organised (for decontamination of highways, streets and public buildings).
 - (iii) Transport vehicles required and arrangements for provision.
 - (iv) Position of depot for the decontamination of vehicles.
 - (v) Personnel required for (a) Decontamination Squads, (b) Vehicle Decontamination Depots.
9. Repair Services and Co-ordination with Public Utility Services.
10. Recruitment and Training of Personnel for various A.R.P. Services:—
- (a) Communications—runners, switchboard operators and telephonists.
 - (b) Air Raid Wardens' Service.
 - (c) Casualty Services.
 - (d) Rescue, Demolition and Clearance of Debris Services.
 - (e) Gas Detection Service.
 - (f) Decontamination Service.
 - (g) Assembly of respirators.

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11. Protection of premises which must be occupied and used for the maintenance of the A.R.P. services.
12. Provision of shelters for the protection of the public.
13. Lighting in highways, streets and public places.
14. Distribution of Civilian Respirators:—
 - (i) Local Respirator Stores, for storage and maintenance of respirators.
 - (ii) Respirator Distributing Depots.
 - (iii) Total number and sizes of respirators required, on basis of census taken of the inhabitants of each dwelling, and Local Respirator Stores at which they must be stored.
 - (iv) Personnel required at Local Respirator Stores.
 - (v) Arrangements made for earmarking vehicles required for transport of assembled respirators.
15. Storage and maintenance of equipment, appliances and materials:—
 - (i) Location of Stores (showing type of equipment, etc., in each store).
 - (ii) Name of official in charge of main stores for each service.
16. Transfer of Civil Population.
17. Arrangements for Control and Co-ordination in time of War.

Arrangements for mutual assistance fall under two heads: those made with the Council of another county or county borough for mutual aid in an emergency, and those made with the council of a county district to act as the agent of the county in certain areas. Arrangements between counties do not necessarily cover their whole areas, but apply as a rule to certain adjacent districts.

The form of general scheme given above is applicable to a county borough or large burgh (Scotland). For the county certain modifications are necessary. A county must specify under Part I of the 1937 Act which are the authorities charged by it with functions under the scheme. The various services may need to be arranged by reference to separate areas or local government districts. A county scheme must indicate how expenditure is to be met, whether through the general county rate or otherwise, and show what expenditure, if any, is to be dealt with as expenditure for special county purposes.

A scheme is a formal document and can only be amended, even in respect of points of detail, with the consent of the Minister con-

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cerned. It therefore merely contains the general framework of the local authority's proposals. Estimates are presented separately, in greater detail, and on a prescribed form.

PROCEDURE BY STAGES

It should not be assumed that the schemes of local authorities have as a rule been presented as a single whole. Schemes can be, and usually are, presented in stages. In the first place, only the formal outline is presented, together with the estimates. Next comes the submission of separate projects under the scheme, their agreement in principle and approval of actual expenditure if this is to rank for grant. Different parts of a general scheme may be presented separately, *e.g.*, proposals with regard to the provision of shelters for the general public do not have to wait on the completion of schemes for the other A.R.P. services, which may themselves be presented separately, and so on. In the case of a county it is often necessary to draw up different plans for different parts of the county, and even where one scheme applies to the whole, the various stages in the preparation of a scheme may be reached separately for different areas. For instance, the Wardens' organisation may be according to county districts or Police Divisions, or other sections of the county. Each unit area for Wardens should then be treated separately. The possibility of treating different parts of the county separately for purposes of scheme-making is of particular importance in counties such as Surrey or Dorset, which come under the jurisdiction of more than one Regional Commissioner and Regional Health Office.

A.R.P. general schemes can thus be built up in stages and projects submitted for approval in advance of incorporation in a general scheme. This procedure for submission by stages has naturally allowed a good deal of variation through the country as a whole. In all cases the initial recruitment and training of personnel for the A.R.P. services, even prior to their actual organisation into groups based on depots, etc., was held to be of paramount importance, but there has been and still is to some extent a considerable amount of divergence in the state of preparedness in the different areas. A certain uniformity for the country as a whole has been achieved through the allocation of personnel according to schedules drawn up by the central departments, though not all districts are up to full war establishment strength. The issue of equipment and appliances varies very much according to the assumed vulnerability of the areas concerned. The county of Oxford, for instance, has received no "Anderson" steel shelters and has a comparatively low standard of equipment in general because it ranks as a non-vulnerable area.

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It is in the sphere of provision of air raid shelters for the general public that there is perhaps the widest divergence of standard, since this depends very much on the initiative of the local authority concerned. The first stage in shelter provision consisted in the making of a survey for adaptable accommodation already in the area, *e.g.*, basements which could be strengthened, and from this the need for additional public shelters could be deduced. The principle of dispersal of population was adopted for shelters, and the provision of public shelters would depend to some extent on the numbers of private shelters available and the possibility of erecting these. Garden shelters obviously cannot be erected for the back-to-back houses of the industrial North and Midlands. There has been, and still is, a greater divergence of standard than even all these varying factors would warrant. In many of the larger cities, the bulk of the public shelter programme has only been carried out since the outbreak of war, while in some areas, *e.g.*, in Northern Wales, the first stage is not in all instances completed even now. Recent responsibility for this divergence can be divided equally between the local authorities and the Regions, but it must not be forgotten that at the outbreak of war many schemes were lying in the Ministry of Home Security awaiting approval. The devolution of sanctioning powers on to the Regions in recent months has in general helped to speed things up.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PRINCIPLES

Early in 1939 the Lord Privy Seal completed a general review of the progress of A.R.P. schemes to date, on the basis of which he introduced new legislation. This became the Civil Defence Act, 1939.

As a result of this survey it was decided to take immediate steps to strengthen the regional staff of the Home Office A.R.P. Department, in order to reduce the need for reference to the central department. The Senior Regional Inspectors of the Department were given the authority of approving, on behalf of the Department, definite parts of the schemes of local authorities. The regional organisation of the Department was subsequently modified.

Meanwhile, the Lord Privy Seal gave some very interesting directions to the local authorities on administrative matters. It was pointed out that the measures of air raid precautions prescribed by regulation affected all the main departments of a local authority. It was proper that they should be controlled by a special committee of the Council, but they must not be treated as matter extraneous to the ordinary functions of local government. Every responsible officer of a local authority, *e.g.*, the Medical Officer of Health, Surveyor or Engineer, should be assigned his specific part in the work, and a chief officer

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of the Council should be put in the position of general co-ordination officer for the preparation of the Council's scheme. Many local authorities had appointed special A.R.P. Officers (*e.g.*, both the City and County of Oxford), who had in most cases done valuable work, but if such an officer had been appointed he should be regarded as assistant or staff officer to the Chief Co-ordinating Officer. He should in no wise attempt to control or relieve the officers in charge of the various departments of their responsibility. (In practice, the work of A.R.P. Officers has tended to be confined to the enrolment and training of volunteers and instruction of the public.) In some areas too much work had been left to the specially appointed A.R.P. Officers, thus giving the impression that the statutory duty of preparing and submitting A.R.P. schemes was one with which the ordinary machinery of local government was not concerned. As a result, this machinery was often not employed to the utmost, and local authorities felt that they had fulfilled their obligations with the appointment of a special officer. Heads of departments concerned with A.R.P. work should have professional and technical assistants to relieve the pressure on them, in view of the fact that they had other duties to perform, but this should not impair their responsibility to the Council for the services under their control.

Thus the first principle established for normal peace-time administration of the A.R.P. services was that of departmental control under a Chief Co-ordinating Officer. The second principle was that of the responsibility of the counties and county boroughs for the preparation of A.R.P. general schemes.

"The Lord Privy Seal considers this principle to be right. In a matter such as air raid precautions neither efficiency nor economy will be obtained through a multiplicity of independent scheme-making authorities, whose boundaries are adjacent. Such a position would have no relation to the requirements of war-time conditions. While, therefore, he will continue to give full consideration to applications from boroughs or urban districts within a county, or from small burghs in Scotland, for power to make a separate scheme, he proposes to continue the present policy of requiring special circumstances to be shown, such as distinctiveness in the character of the area from the surrounding districts."¹

On the other hand, the Lord Privy Seal pointed out that in some areas the county councils were not making full use of the resources and energies of the borough and district councils, and the councils of small burghs. This resulted in the discouragement of those areas and of their volunteers.

¹ See Home Office A.R.P. Department Circular, No. 9/1939.

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" If war came, important parts of any county scheme would have to be carried out by the boroughs and urban districts, and small burghs, and their officials. It is essential, therefore, that these authorities should be taken fully into consultation in the preparation of all schemes, and should be given, so far as possible, specific responsibilities, such as the preparation of a particular depot, or the provision of a specified number of parties or squads. The circular of 9th August, 1938, on procedure by stages was designed to facilitate this, and the definition of personnel requirements conveyed to county councils with the Circular No. 1/1939 of the 4th instant will simplify matters. It has been found practicable in a number of counties to give to the larger authorities, or to groups of authorities, considerable freedom in recruiting, training of personnel, siting of depots, etc., subject to general co-ordination by the county Council, and this should be the aim."

In other words, the division of work within a county should be by county district areas, and there should be a good deal of delegation of duties. In this context it is interesting to note that the County of Oxford, which delegates no powers to smaller authorities, is nevertheless organised according to county district areas, each one of the sub-divisions of the county for A.R.P. purposes consisting of a group of county districts. A circular on personnel requirements sent from the A.R.P. Department to Clerks of County Councils on 4th January, 1939, had already given explicit instructions on this head.

" In a county, the physical distribution of volunteers and their organisation must be by boroughs and county districts. This should be done even where the service is being organised on a county basis. . . ."

Finally, the Lord Privy Seal expressed the wish that the Wardens' organisation should in general be entrusted to the executive control of the Chief Constable (outside the Metropolitan Police District). He gave as his reason the fact that the duties of Wardens would be closely linked with the functions of the police in time of war, and thought that the ordinary machinery of local government was not well equipped for the task of organising and training large numbers of Wardens. Not all local authorities have complied with this wish. Whereas in the City of Oxford the Chief Constable is at the present time both A.R.P. Controller and Head of the Wardens' Service, in the County of Oxford he is neither. The argument put forward by the Lord Privy Seal was not entirely convincing, since the ordinary machinery of local government was expressly left to deal with the equally unaccustomed task of recruiting and training the other branches of the A.R.P. Services.

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FINANCIAL PROCEDURE

All "approved" expenditure of the local authorities on A.R.P. Services, whether of a capital or other nature, ranks for Exchequer grant. Grant is paid, as has already been described, according to certain schedules, which are of a comparatively simple character. The manner in which grant is paid, as distinct from its computation, is a much more complicated subject, and is closely linked with the degree of devolution of powers from the county to smaller local authorities.

In those cases where there is no devolution, the payment of grant presents no complexities. It is paid to the county and there the matter ends. When the county asks certain smaller local authorities to act as its agent, it reimburses their expenditure and grant is paid to the county. The Lord Privy Seal, in the circular quoted above, ruled that on grounds of equity and convenience the cost of air raid precautions should in general be borne on the county rate. There was, however, a danger that the control of expenditure by the county might seriously hamper and delay the progress of local authorities within the county even in matters deputed to their charge. He therefore asked county councils to simplify procedure for expenditure by borough and district councils (or small burghs), particularly by authorising them to incur without prior reference expenditure which falls within any general or special approval given under Section 8 (Exchequer Grants) of the A.R.P. Act, 1937.

There are various degrees of financial delegation from the counties to the county districts. In the Southern Region which, apart from the county boroughs in the area, is sparsely populated, there is comparatively little financial devolution. Oxford County delegates neither functions nor financial powers (with one or two very minor exceptions). Hampshire delegates the power of incurring expenditure within limits approved by the scheme-making authority, but does not delegate the power of claiming grant. The greatest degree of devolution is in that part of Surrey which falls within the Region. This is a more thickly populated area, which would fall more appropriately within the London Region. Here, the county delegates both the power of incurring expenditure and the power of claiming grant, and the county districts (with, of course, the exception of the rural districts) approximate in status to that of the smaller scheme-making authorities. Between these two forms of devolution there are intermediate stages. Delegation is not always uniform, but occurs in various degrees for different purposes. Even where there is full financial devolution, the county continues to act in an advisory capacity to the county districts.

In all cases where there is not financial devolution, statements on

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expenditure are submitted by the county council, on the basis of returns made by the county districts to the county. Where services are borne by county districts without reimbursement by the county, grant is paid to them direct, and their returns, although forwarded to the Ministry through the county, do not have to be certified by the latter, as is the case in all other instances.

Finally, it should be said that all scheme-making authorities are on a level for operational but not administrative purposes. For operational purposes they work to the Region direct, but they are still under the general administrative control of the county, although they do not refer to it for grant.

REGIONAL CONTROL

In accordance with his intention of reducing the need for reference to the central department, Sir John Anderson announced in the House of Commons on 2nd February, 1939, the proposed division of the country into Regions for A.R.P. purposes. The regional organisation was described in some detail in the departmental circular issued to the scheme-making authorities on the same day. (Home Office A.R.P. Department Circular, No. 20/1939.)

Under the new organisation certain modifications were made in the areas which had hitherto served for the A.R.P. Department Regional Inspectors. England was divided into ten Regions, while Wales and Scotland constituted Regions in themselves. The terms "Chief Inspector" and "Regional Inspector" were discontinued and in their place we have a Chief Regional Officer at the Home Office A.R.P. Department (later Ministry of Home Security) and 38 Regional Officers (in three grades) divided between the twelve Regions. In most Regions there is a Technical Inspector specially concerned with shelters and other precautions of a structural nature, together with one or more Fire Brigade Inspectors who work at the Regional Office, although the Auxiliary Fire Service is organised separately from all other A.R.P. services. Such was the regional office in time of peace.

At the outbreak of war each Region was put in charge of a Regional Commissioner, assisted by a Deputy Commissioner. Their war staffs include the A.R.P. Regional Officers together with liaison officers drawn from the different Government departments concerned with Civil Defence. Liaison has recently been extended to the military authorities in the area.

The Regional Commissioners thus had no part in the peace-time administration of civil defence and their war-time powers are—

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publicly at least—ill-defined. In case of the interruption of communications with London, they are to represent not the Ministry of Home Security but His Majesty's Government as a whole, and in this case their power will be very wide. Nevertheless, up to the present time, the office of the Regional Commissioner has been essentially the regional organisation for purposes of A.R.P., and, as has been shown, the regional organisation of the Home Office (later the Ministry of Home Security) A.R.P. Department served as its nucleus. It is only recently that the Regional Commissioners have assumed functions which though connected with Civil Defence go beyond the scope of air raid precautions as envisaged in the Civil Defence Act.

Under the Civil Defence Act, 1939, the casualty services of the local authorities were placed under the control of the Ministry of Health. At the same time these services were confined strictly to the provision of first aid. They are not concerned with the provision of hospital treatment, which is organised by the Ministry on a different basis. Casualty services and the evacuation of the civil population thus come under the supervision of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Health. All other branches of A.R.P. are supervised at present from the office of the Regional Commissioner. Between these two offices there is constant and close collaboration, especially as regards that part of their work which overlaps.

Like the Minister himself, the Regional Commissioner has little power of compulsion, unless he chooses to take over entirely the work of a defaulting local authority. The A.R.P. services remain purely local government services on the administrative side. For operational purposes the Regional Office is a definite link in the chain of responsibility. The main importance of the Regional Office from the administrative point of view lies in its power to sanction expenditure and in its inspectional functions.

There was formerly a distinction made between expenditure which had to be submitted to the Minister for approval in advance and expenditure which could be agreed on locally with the Regional Inspector. His sanctioning powers, however, were very low and did not exceed £100. At the present time, virtually all expenditure is sanctioned finally at the Regional Office, Treasury officials having been seconded to the Regions for the purpose. Expenditure is generally sanctioned by the Senior Regional Officer, acting on behalf of the Regional Commissioner. Capital expenditure above certain limits still has to be sanctioned by the central department, but these limits are high.

A study of county minutes reveals the fact that since the beginning of 1940 almost all matters of an administrative nature, in addition to the sanctioning of expenditure, have been referred by local authorities

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to the Regions. This is an inevitable development since the divorce of administrative from financial control would lead to endless delay and confusion and quite nullify any advantages of speed which regional devolution may possess. It is noticeable, however, that even the most petty matters, including items of less than £10 expenditure, have to be referred to the Region, and it would certainly seem that there is room for some of that simplification of procedure once advocated by the Lord Privy Seal as between the counties and the county districts. There can be no such simplification of procedure if matters concerning a few pounds have to be referred by the county to the Region. As the schemes of the local authorities become completed the necessity to refer even the most trivial matters to the Region will become less irksome, but until the schemes are complete the Regional Office, like the central department, can form a bottle-neck. However, in general, matters referred to the Region appear to be settled without any very great delay.

Since the Regions pay a proportion of the cost of all schemes, they have the right and duty to make inspections. Inspections are carried out by the Regional Officers, and fall under various heads, such as buildings, equipment, personnel and exercises. There is at the present time little or no inspection from the central department in so far as the general A.R.P. schemes of the local authorities are concerned. The Regional Commissioner exercises a strong control in matters of personnel, particularly as regards the vexed question of paid versus voluntary personnel. He is responsible for seeing that the instructions of the Minister are carried out in this respect. The local authorities do not always follow his instructions, but if they do not they themselves have to foot the bill in excess of approved expenditure. The matter of paid versus voluntary personnel illustrates the strength and weakness of regional—and indeed, of ministerial—control. The Regional Commissioner can force local authorities to dismiss paid personnel, he can even, and sometimes does, increase their paid quota for certain services. He has, however, no means beyond persuasion of inducing local authorities to recruit a sufficient number of unpaid personnel. When it is remembered that the majority of personnel are unpaid, the importance of this factor can be appreciated. The control of the Regional Commissioner, as of the Minister, consists in the application of the various personnel schedules to the different services.

Regional inspection is carried out on a district, and not a functional, basis, each Regional Officer being responsible for a certain area. After each inspection, reports are sent to the Ministry of Home Security. In addition there are certain routine returns. At the present time, A.R.P. Controllers send weekly and fortnightly reports to

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Regional Offices, which cover (a) changes in organisation, (b) personnel strength of the various services, (c) shelter programme. County districts in their turn make corresponding reports to the County A.R.P. Controller, on which these periodic returns are based.

Local authorities are obliged, under the Civil Defence Act, to maintain records of all equipment furnished to them by the Crown, and themselves to make inspections at suitable intervals to ascertain damage or defects. They are supposed to carry out half-yearly stock-taking inspections.

Their records must by statute cover:—

- (a) Equipment received by local authorities, the date at which and authority or person from whom received.
- (b) Equipment distributed to members of the public.
- (c) In the case of equipment other than equipment distributed to members of the public,
 - (i) equipment which is not in use and places where stored or kept;
 - (ii) equipment which is in use, service by which it is being used or, in case of equipment not used by a service, the purpose for which it is used; and
 - (iii) equipment which has been consumed, destroyed or lost.
- (d) Equipment returned to the Minister or delivered or transferred to any authority or person (including date of return, delivery or transfer).
- (e) Replacement of equipment used, and date.

Local authorities are obliged at all times to permit any person authorised by the Ministers of Home Security and Health to inspect both the equipment and the records. This inspection is now carried out from the Regional Office and seems to serve, together with the record, in lieu of periodic returns on equipment. Returns can of course be compiled at any time on the basis of the current records.

The Regions have thus become the eyes and ears of the Ministry and there is no doubt that the greatest progress in the A.R.P. services has in fact been made since the institution of the regional organisation, though this may have been due more to the compulsion of events than to the compulsion of the Regional Commissioner.

When the regional organisation was set up, it was intended that there should be in each Region a Regional Council composed of representatives of the local scheme-making authorities. In time of peace, the Regional Council was to provide a means of securing contact

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between the Regional Commissioner and the local authorities, to further co-operation between the various services and authorities concerned with civil defence, and to advise the Regional Commissioner on such matters relating to civil defence as he might refer to them.

The Regional Councils met the fate of most bodies whose functions are both purely advisory and ill-defined. They hardly met at all. In time of peace, representatives of local authorities made direct contact with the office of the Regional Commissioner as need arose, while there was close and growing collaboration between the Regional officers and the officers of the local authorities responsible for the different A.R.P. services. In time of war the A.R.P. Controllers are the main link between the Regional Commissioners and the local authorities, although the contacts between the Regional officers and local heads of services remain.

Oxford. July, 1940.

HALDANE ESSAY COMPETITION, 1940

Report of Adjudicators

Sixteen essays were submitted in the competition, and most of them, following the suggestion made in the published conditions, dealt with aspects of the impact of the war on administration. We regret, however, that there was no essay of outstanding excellence and we do not recommend the award of the Haldane Medal. Three of the essays, without being outstanding, reach quite a good level, but no one of these is notably better than the other two, and we recommend that the prize be divided between the three writers. The essays concerned are:—

The Assistance Services, the War and the Future, by "Heretic";

Municipal Capital Finance in War-time, by "Inconnu"; and

Inland Telecommunications in Peace and War, by "A. Kay."

One of the best essays was by "Michael Edwards" on "*The First Casualty of the War*," described as a "brief study of the impact of war and Fascism upon the educational services," but this dealt much more with educational ideals and policy than with administration. Two other essays call for mention, one by "Minneriya" on "*Capital Improvements and Agricultural Returns*," and the other by "Javee" on "*Publicity as an Integral Feature of Public Administration*." "Minneriya" gives an interesting and well-written account of agricultural conditions in Ceylon (the editor of the Journal may like to consider publication of the descriptive parts, after the author has edited the paper for this purpose) but does not make a sufficient contribution to the administrative aspect to justify the award of a prize; while "Javee" has written a paper with much sound sense but with too much "journalese" and extravagant claims for the place of the publicity officer in municipal organisation—"second only to that of the Town Clerk."

We suggest that the question of publishing any of the essays be left to the editor of PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, to be decided upon normal considerations of suitability for publication.

A weakness of most of the essays was that the writers tended to give too much of their space to mere narrative, some quite interesting in itself but with little original thought.

The advice in the published conditions, that competitors should take a subject lying within their personal experience or of which they had made a special study, was too often ignored, with the result that the treatment was in many cases too broad. There was also a tendency to get away from the consideration of aspects of *administration*, which, of course, should be the main feature of an essay submitted in this competition. It would be well if the scope of the competition and the kind of treatment desired in the essays could be

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made more clear to intending competitors. The points that need to be emphasised are:—

That the subject chosen should be of administrative interest;

that the essays should deal particularly with the administrative aspect of the selected subject;

that, while narrative of historical development or of present conditions is not ruled out, may indeed in some measure be essential for the proper treatment of the selected subject, particular weight will be given to real thought in the problems which arise, and to constructive suggestions how they may be dealt with or improvements made on prevailing practice;

that candidates are advised to choose a subject on which they can write from personal experience and, being familiar with its practice, are better able to write of it with originality of thought; and

to choose a subject well within the range of their experience with which they can deal with some thoroughness even within the short compass of an essay, rather than a subject of wide expanse which, within the space available, they can do little more than skim the surface, and on which it is all too easy to slip into platitudes, even with the best will in the world to avoid them.

(Signed) I. G. GIBBON.

A. J. WALDEGRAVE.

July, 1940.

The names of those competitors dividing the prize were:—

"Heretic"—Herbert W. Marshall, Chief Clerk, Public Assistance Department, Stoke-on-Treat Corporation;

"Inconnu"—Arthur Rothwell, B.A. (Admin.), A.I.M.T.A., City Treasurer's Department, Manchester.

"A. Kay"—A. K. Robinson, Efficiency Engineer, Chief Regional Engineer's Office, G.P.O.

The other competitors mentioned are as follows:—

"Michael Edwards"—Miss Margaret A. B. Jones, Head Teacher, Fishponds College, Bristol Education Authority.

¹ "Minneriya"—H. E. Peries, C.C.S., Secretary to Ministry of Local Administration, Colombo, Ceylon.

"Javee"—Leonard Fletcher, Publicity and Development Officer, County Borough of Grimsby.

¹ See article entitled "Agrarian Problems of Ceylon," page 275 of this issue.

Agrarian Problems of Ceylon

By H. E. PERIES, C.C.S.

[Being extracts from "*Capital Improvements and Agricultural Returns*," an essay submitted for the 1940 Haldane Essay Competition.]

AS this paper is concerned with Ceylon problems, it is perhaps desirable to commence with a brief description of economic conditions in the Island. It may, however, be observed in passing that these problems do not appear to be very dissimilar to those facing other parts of the Colonial Empire. Ceylon is 25,500 square miles in area with a population of $5\frac{3}{4}$ millions. It depends almost entirely on its three export industries of tea, rubber and coconut. Tea and rubber are grown almost exclusively for export in the areas with high rainfall, the "wet zone" as it is called. The areas under cultivation are 556,650 under tea and 604,000 acres under rubber. Tea is mainly a plantation industry and most of the labour employed in it comes from India. The proportion of small-holdings under 10 acres cultivated with rubber is somewhat larger than is the case with tea, but this is also mainly a plantation industry and here too a large proportion of the labour employed is imported. 1,100,000 acres are planted in coconut, chiefly in the maritime areas and in a fairly dry inland belt in the north-west of the Island, as this tree requires less rain. About half this area belongs to small-holders. Coconuts are largely used for food but the greater part is grown for export. The annual increase in population in 1938 was nearly 90,000, and this rate of increase is likely to continue.

The staple food of the country is rice, and of this about two-thirds is imported, one-third being grown locally in small plots of irrigable land called "mudland." The area under cultivation in 1938 was 850,000 acres. The paddy, as the unhusked rice is called, is grown chiefly for domestic consumption, and the sale of paddy even involves in certain of the more conservative areas a loss of status. Paddy requires a large amount of water—"duty" as it is technically called—

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for its successful cultivation. In the wet zone the rainfall and perennial streams supply the necessary water, but in the dry zone rainwater cultivation is extremely precarious. Here the heavy inter-monsoonal rainfall is collected and stored in a system of "tanks" usually bounded on three sides by a bank or earth-work, the water flowing in over the sloping ground on the open side. The water is run out through a sluice in the earth-work and distributed gravitationally to the fields as required by a system of channels. The tank is also provided usually with a masonry spill to allow any excess water to flow out without damage to the earth-work. The catchment area is often small and many tanks collect sufficient water only in exceptionally wet seasons. Small village communities live near these tanks and cultivate the fields irrigated from them. In addition to paddy cultivation, yams, vegetables and dry grain (grain which does not require flooding for cultivation) are grown in jungle clearings. Forest produce is also collected and fish are caught in the tanks. Houses are built from materials available at the spot. Paddy is not purchased in village areas except when the crop has failed. Buffaloes are used for cultivation in ploughing and threshing and cattle for draught purposes. Milk is seldom drunk but curd is eaten in certain areas. The diet has been found to be very deficient in protective elements and in calcium. Cash is only required for the purchase of clothes, for taxes, for articles of food such as curry stuffs, dry fish and for litigation, which unfortunately has become quite popular. In the wet zone this ready money is obtained either from small-holdings of rubber or coconut or by casual labour in neighbouring plantations or by the sale of vegetables. Due to religious prejudices the keeping of poultry is not popular nor are cattle sold except in very exceptional circumstances. In the dry zone cash is obtained by growing "money" crops of oil seeds such as gingelly. In most of the dry zone malaria is endemic but is especially prevalent during the north-east monsoon.

Law and order are maintained in village areas by "headmen" appointed by the Central Government, and supervised by the Revenue Officer. Serious crime is investigated by the Central Government police. Village schools are maintained by the Central Government and compulsory elementary education is provided free in all but the more remote areas. Elected Village Committees for groups of villagers, financed chiefly by a poll tax, look after village paths and purely village matters. Irrigation and cultivation are, on the other hand, controlled by an irrigation headman appointed by cultivators holding land "under" the tank. The necessary earth-work and channel maintenance is carried out by the cultivators (urged, if necessary, by prosecution in the local court). Masonry work is done by the Central Government. The dates for sowing and the variety of

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paddy to be used are all decided at a meeting of the cultivators. Difficulties arise, but far less frequently than one would expect. In times of drought, the tank bed is even cultivated by the joint effort of the village, and the crop divided amicably. In ancient Sinhalese times the village tanks were not entirely dependent on the monsoon rains, but were fed by channels, sometimes over a hundred miles in length, from larger irrigation works and anicuts. Many of these have fallen into disrepair.

The policy up to very recent times has been to concentrate on the development of the major plantation industries, and much attention was paid to road and rail building with this object in view. Recent changes in the constitution, and perhaps the grant of universal adult franchise, have diverted attention from the requirements of plantation industries to the needs of the small-holder and the landless villager. A severe malaria epidemic, an economy survey and the recent interest in dietetic questions have revealed serious defects in village economy. It has been found that serious deficiencies in diet are much less likely to occur where the food is varied and not confined to one or two staple articles of diet. Attempts are now being made to grow other crops, such as soya beans, etc., and also to grow crops for sale more extensively than is being done at present. In a recent nutrition survey it was found that in two villages fairly close together, the diet in one consisted of rice and vegetables only, while in the other there was an excess of fish and a deficiency in the quantity of green vegetables consumed. This was not due to religious prejudice nor could it be attributed entirely to faulty transport. Every endeavour is being made to encourage the consumption of fruit, milk and fresh fish. The chief obstacle to the success of these measures is the very low economic condition in the villages, and until this is improved not much can be hoped for. The recent depression has also shown that the future of the plantation industries is far from secure and the war has accentuated these uncertainties. Provision has also to be made for the rapid increase in population.

THE WET ZONE

The wet zone, which is fairly well developed and adequately provided with transport facilities, is densely populated. The class of landless peasants is becoming numerous, while the "fragmentation" of holdings, with its attendant evils, is common in these parts.

One crop of five-month paddy is grown a year in the season June to February. There is no rotation of crops nor is the land left fallow. Without irrigation on the average one crop in every three years is fair—about twelve-fold, one is poor—about six-fold, and the other fails completely. With irrigation, on the other hand, one could expect

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seven average crops—twelve-fold—in every eight years. In the area in question an acre is sown with two bushels of paddy. The price of paddy is on the average Rs. 1.25 a bushel. With high crops the price paddy falls in Rs. 1, but we will neglect this and content ourselves with a first approximation or alternatively we could assume that our cultivator is optimistic enough not to expect this fall in price. The cultivation of an acre costs Rs. 12.50, of which Rs. 6.50 is the cost of the initial preparation of the land for cultivation and Rs. 6 is spent later. The need for this distinction arises from the fact that the expenditure of Rs. 6.50 has to be incurred in any case, while the balance would not be spent unless weather conditions were propitious. It will be observed that with a failure of crops once in three years the land is perhaps adequately "rested." This would no longer be true with irrigation, and consequently the land will have to be more heavily manured or a system of rotation would have to be adopted.

Artificial manure is not often used and in fact its value in tropical agriculture appears to be a matter of controversy in scientific circles. Cattle manure and such green manure as is used are not in general bought.

Irrigation works, such as the Attanagala Oya Scheme located in developed areas, have, as their object, to afford better irrigation facilities to lands already under cultivation rather than to bring fresh lands under cultivation. Such schemes are easier to work than are schemes designed to attract population to hitherto sparsely inhabited areas, but there is only a limited field for improvements of this nature. As most of the land in these areas is privately owned the irrigation work frequently involves the acquisition of land and the cost of the scheme is, therefore, increased. It was formerly the practice to charge irrigation rates from the irrigated fields, but these rates have been repeatedly waived in recent years. It is possible that irrigation facilities will in future be afforded without charge in the same way as roads are provided.

Social factors play an important part in fixing the capital value of land. Primogeniture is foreign to the indigenous system of inheritance. Families as a rule are large. Inherited fields are, therefore, subject to rapid subdivision. To make matters worse, because of the expense and difficulties of legal partition, the land is often held in undivided shares. It is therefore difficult for any shareholder to incur expense in improving a particular part of the land, for he would thereby lay himself open to loss or expensive litigation. Divided fields, on the other hand, are often too small to be cultivated economically. Consequently in certain wet zones joint shareholders cultivate the land in turn, each shareholder taking a number of turns in proportion to his share. This avoids fragmentation but it will be seen

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that there is every likelihood of the land being over-exploited. Again, the commonest form of tenancy is the "andhe" system in which the owner of the land supplies the cultivator with the buffaloes needed for ploughing, etc., and half the manure in return for half the crop. Seed is supplied to be returned at harvest with an additional half as interest. The cultivator in these circumstances would clearly use more manure than he would otherwise use, but his inducement to increase the yield is not as great as it would be if he paid a fixed rent. Another factor of great importance is the extent of rural indebtedness. The cultivator often starts the cultivation season with little paddy and no cash and he has to obtain credit from the local store or "boutique" by pledging his future crop. He finds at harvest that a large proportion of his return goes to the boutique keeper as interest and repayment of the advance and the surplus of the crop has to be sold to him at uneconomic rates for fear of annoying the only source of credit in the neighbourhood. The present yields are poor, yields as poor as eight-fold (of the amount sown) are not uncommon, while yields of thirty-fold are very rare. Very little care is exercised in the selection of seed. The paddy used has become very hybridised. Progress is now being made in breeding pure-line paddies and of developing special strains. Little attention has been paid to the proper rotation of crops. Paddy is grown on the land until a scarcity of water compels it to be left fallow.

THE DRY ZONE

The dry zone, on the other hand, is very thinly populated but it is unhealthy and not very fertile. With a view to settling the surplus population of the wet zone in these areas an ambitious scheme for developing the agricultural resources of major irrigation works and by improvement in agricultural technique, such as the use of better seed, better ploughs, etc., is being pushed forward.

Much of the land in these sparsely populated areas is "Crown" and colonists from outside the area are encouraged to settle on it. They are at first given occupancy rights at a nominal rental and this is later converted into a long lease. Alienation is subject to the approval of a Central Government official. This type involves special difficulties. First there is the problem of sickness. The areas in question are usually malarial, and the malaria carrier in Ceylon prefers to breed in clear sunny pools. The process of clearing the jungle thus favours the spread of malaria. The colonists are also not as inured to fever as are the local residents. The colonists are also separated from the main family group. In addition to the expense of converting the irrigable area into paddy fields (which is only partially subsidised by Government), of purchasing cattle and building a

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dwelling-house, money has often to be sent home. Additional expenditure has also to be incurred in maintaining social ties with the settler's village. Settlers are encouraged to clear the site of forest and are paid for the work done. The cleared land is very fertile and the crops for the first two or three years are abnormally high. This advantage is, however, offset by difficulties in marketing the produce. There is also the fact that there is very little subsidiary employment though work is usually offered on the irrigation works themselves. Marketing and credit facilities have also to be specially provided.

THE VALUE OF AN IRRIGATION SCHEME

A preliminary to the consideration of any scheme is a careful irrigation survey. From this the catchment area of the proposed work and the quantity of water normally available for irrigation and the area which could be rendered irrigable can be ascertained. It is now part of a well-established routine to obtain a soil survey as well so that it is possible to predict what crops could be grown and what the yields would be. It is also the practice to collect figures of the total rainfall and of the distribution (which is as important as the total rainfall) and also of the economic conditions in the area. One such report on the Attanagala Oya Scheme is contained in Sessional Paper 8 of 1939 and gives, among other facts, the rainfall and its distribution analysed for a number of years, the average size of a holding, the prevailing systems of tenancy, the types of paddy sown and the yields, and figures of the average number of crop failures under existing conditions and of the expected number after the completion of the proposed work. It should be observed in passing that the cultivators' own figures for crop failures are often inaccurate.

One of the objects of an irrigation scheme is to enable further areas to be brought under cultivation. Its value from this point of view is found by totalling the capital equivalents of these previously unproductive areas less their previous value, if any. It would also reduce the losses due to periodic drought and perhaps enable increased yields to be obtained from the existing fields. Thus, for instance, one crop is grown without irrigation, with irrigation it might be possible to grow a second crop in the year. A rather less obvious effect is that it could render economically practicable a better paying crop. A certain degree of speculation necessarily enters into any agricultural enterprise. The cultivator seeks to maximise his expectation of profit, which in turn depends on the expected yields and the degree of certainty that the crop would reach maturity. For instance, a four-month paddy may yield a better profit than a three-month variety but the increased risk may more than counter-balance this advantage

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in the eyes of the cultivator. As the degree of certainty increases the cultivator would also be willing to invest more money and labour in carrying out intensive cultivation than he would if his chances of success were small.

We have so far dealt with a money economy in which at a given place and time there exists a definite "price" for the commodity produced. Labour costs are similarly defined. By far the greater part of the crop is sold and labour is mostly paid for in cash or in other ways the cash equivalents of which are readily ascertainable. In a purely subsistence economy where any deficiency in the crop cannot be remedied by buying, and any surplus can only be stored and cannot be sold, the previous calculations have no significance. "Village Ceylon" is not on a subsistence economy nor yet on a pure money economy. "Money" crops are grown or subsidiary employment for wages is sought to supply the necessary amount of ready money. Paddy is grown chiefly for domestic consumption and the labour demands are met from a family group and are not paid for. Crop in excess of consumption and storage requirements can only be sold for use outside the area. The area itself is isolated and transport facilities are poor. In these circumstances the question arises as to what should be considered the price of paddy or other crops grown for domestic consumption. The price obtained for the surplus would be too low an estimate. An alternative estimate would be the price at which paddy or rice of similar quality could be obtained from outside after allowing for the labour involved in converting the paddy into rice. In a money economy where crops are grown for sale and in which sales are frequent, it is necessary for equilibrium that the demand price should equal the supply price. In a village there are a few householders, all of whom depend on agriculture. If weather conditions have been favourable nearly all of them would have sufficient food crops for their needs. If, on the other hand, the crop has failed food will have to be brought in from outside. In these circumstances demand and supply never co-exist simultaneously and consequently demand price need not equal supply price. The main consuming areas are the urban areas and the heavy cost of transport will lower the price of paddy at the village. The urban areas are also the chief distributing centres: the cost of transport will, therefore, increase the price at which rice is supplied to the village in case of need.

In the absence of a regular supply of country-grown paddy, the urban population have grown accustomed to the milled rice imported from abroad. The keeping qualities of this rice is superior and it has a characteristic white appearance. The country paddy, on the other hand, has to be converted into rice in smaller quantities as it does not

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keep well. There is only one mill for this purpose though several more are under consideration. The conversion has, therefore, to be carried out in hand mortars, and those unaccustomed to the labour find it irksome. The resultant red rice, though of superior food value, is harder to digest and the taste for it has to be re-acquired. In the meantime the imported rice commands a premium over the locally produced rice.

A similar difficulty arises regarding the cost of labour. At first sight it would appear that the proper cost to assign would be the money equivalent of maintaining the family group at the standard of life prevailing in the area. This is, however, excessive, as paddy cultivation occupies only a part of the year. A fairer estimate would be the wages obtainable for other equivalent work in the area or the return from a money crop obtainable with similar exertion and similar risk in the same period. On the other hand, further labour would be difficult to obtain and might have to be obtained from outside the area. It would consequently cost more. If there is no outside employment and no money crop is grown we shall have to take the cost of labour as equivalent to the living costs of the family group.

It will be seen that the income from fields in excess of what must be cultivated to produce sufficient for domestic consumption and which can be cultivated with family labour would be comparatively small. If paddy cultivation is dependent entirely on rainfall the period for ploughing and sowing is very short and the demands on the available labour at this time are consequently high. In practice no more lands can be cultivated than can be dealt with by the available labour in the short ploughing season. If the irrigation project serves to lengthen this period, it will, therefore, effectively reduce the labour costs and enable more land to be cultivated. Consequently it will increase the equivalent capital value. These are by far the most important items of income and expenditure and with these prices we could work out the capital equivalent of the maximised returns from our fields before and after the building of the irrigation work.

It will be observed that one important aspect of this question has been entirely omitted from the preceding discussion. This is the effect on labour. We have made no attempt to calculate the utility or disutility of the diversion of labour involved. Outside the three chief towns, Colombo, Kandy and Galle, where unemployment does exist and "educated unemployment" threatens to be as widespread as in India; unemployment as such scarcely occurs in Ceylon. In fact, a serious scarcity of labour might be inferred from the presence in such large numbers of immigrant labour. Difficulties have recently arisen with the Indian Government regarding immigration and until this question is settled it is difficult to foretell what the future will be.

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But seasonal under-employment is prevalent in nearly all rural areas and is the main problem. Agriculture alone and particularly paddy cultivation provides heavy work at particular seasons. In the absence of alternative employment such as cottage industries or other forms of subsidiary light industry it is not possible to obtain work at other periods. In Calvert's *Wealth and Welfare in the Punjab* it is estimated that on the average a cultivator works on dry land 120 days and on irrigated land 160 days of eight hours each per year. This calculation is applicable to Ceylon as well. It should be added that this problem is engaging the attention of the Ceylon Government and attempts are being made to foster the industrial development of the country.

Reviews

The Politics of Democratic Socialism: an Essay on Social Policy

By E. F. M. DURBAN. Pp. 375. (Published by G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd.) 7s. 6d. net.

THIS is a refreshingly provocative and timely book. Whatever one may think of Mr. Durban's socialism—and truly its somewhat spiritless and apologetic air suggest intellectual in-breeding—there is confidence, passion, and real emotion in his defence of democracy and freedom. And, his counter-attacks on dictatorships (both proletarian and fascist) are sheer joy. The foundations of "dictatorships of the proletariat" are analysed and legislated as mere confused intellectualism. Fascism is destroyed because its ends—inevitably—are the degradation and enslavement of humanity.

In his defence of democracy Mr. Durban briefly reproduces those arguments of John Stuart Mill and the Utilitarians which it is important to remember in these days—stressing the importance of general agreement about fundamentals in all sections of the community, and the capacity of rivals to bear with each other as far as possible in all matters not in this category.

It may be that the time has arrived for the re-examination of these principles in the light of recent experience, but, before embarking on such a task, it is well to have it thus recorded that, for a century at least, these principles have provided the working basis for government in this and other democratic countries.

In tracing the successes of democratic institutions to certain emotional characteristics, Mr. Durban has some very important things

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to say. And, he is obviously not unaware of the relationship between the "accidents of history" and these emotional characteristics, but his treatment of the subject would be strengthened by more emphasis on this aspect. After all, it is of considerably more than merely theoretical importance to understand how these things have grown to strength in this and certain other countries and yet have so frequently withered and died on transplantation to other political soils and climates.

Having in mind some of the very important questions which will have to be answered at the victorious end of this war, questions which may—to the peril of humanity—be answered wrongly, one could have wished for greater emphasis on such mundane matters as the nature and significance of tradition, the organs and processes of internal political and social change in a democracy, and the essential conditions for the successful development of such communal traditions and organs. Such a study might at least be counted upon to correct the destructive assumption that we in this happy island—and perhaps a few other almost equally blessed spots—possess *exclusively* the capacity or character to develop, successfully, the free democratic way of life.

It is only fair to Mr. Durban to remember, however, that although this book of his was completed after the outbreak of the war, a great deal of its material was prepared and written before this. At that time the problems to which I have just referred did not present themselves with the same urgency and unavoidableness as they do to-day. Party divisions were then real, and in order to round off the significance of his analysis Mr. Durban devotes the later chapters of his book to a suggested Labour Party policy or programme. In this he takes as his foundation the principle derived from his analysis of democracy, that the programme or policy must breathe the spirit of compromise and accommodation. He introduces new matter by his suggestion that the social service policy has possibly been pressed as far as it is safe to do so without imperilling the economic basis of the country. The policy of Labour should therefore slow up in its social demands until it has achieved greater progress in the national ownership, control and planning of industry and commerce.

This is a piece of bold writing, and it is in the mood where its author challenges all comers to attack his thesis at any point. It is not, however, my present purpose to pursue this course. I have derived both pleasure and profit from reading this book, and my purpose in this review is to entice my readers to seek pleasure at the same source. This I hope I have now done.

A. C. STEWART.

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Prices and Wages in England from the 12th to the 19th Century. Vol. I: Price Tables: Mercantile Era

By SIR WILLIAM BEVERIDGE AND COLLABORATORS. Pp. lx + 756. (Longmans, Green and Co.) 1939. 31s. 6d. net.

THIS impressive volume, here tardily and briefly noticed, is particularly welcome, not merely as a magnificent contribution to scholarship, but as a striking example of the development of co-operative international scholarship, now so rudely shattered by the war.

As it is no secret in academic circles that Sir William Beveridge has long professed his devotion to the history of prices, it has been permissible to expect that this volume, or something very much like it, would sooner or later make its appearance.

An immense amount of hard work and careful scholarship has gone into its preparation, yet this first volume is presented to the world at a price less than the equivalent of three or four novels which it certainly equals in bulk and far exceeds in cost of production. It is the best bargain in historical research which has appeared for many a long day.

The work as a whole is part of an international undertaking in the launching of which Sir William Beveridge played a leading part. Assured, through Professor E. F. Gay of Harvard University, of the keen interest of American scholars in the scheme, it was fortunate in attracting the friendly support of the Rockefeller Foundation. With such indispensable financial aid it was possible to establish the International Committee on Price History, through whose encouragement parallel enterprises were set on foot in Austria, France, Germany, Holland and the U.S.A.

In order to keep in step with these other studies the first English volume has been confined to the period (about A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1830) for which continental material is more copiously available. Few other countries have considerable series of price records reaching back, as some English do, to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. English material on the preceding "Manorial Era" (A.D. 1150-A.D. 1550) will form the second volume in the English series because of this fact. A third volume is reserved for separate presentation of statistics upon which economic historians have always concentrated most attention, namely, the prices of wheat and wages. Not until this factual material has all been assembled will a fourth volume appear containing a general review of the whole work and an index.

The present volume does not yield its secrets readily, and the more fainthearted reader will be very tentative in his own conclusions until he is aided by the general survey promised by the experts who have

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lived with the problem for so long. Nevertheless it is a rich mine, the like of which has not hitherto been available. It would be unfair to compare it with the pioneer work of Thorold Rogers, which it will completely supersede, without remembering gratefully how much that lone scholar achieved by himself in an era when historical research, as we know it to-day, was first becoming a possibility.

The material now presented is drawn from the records of the following sources, many of which Thorold Rogers did not or could not use. Winchester College 1393-1817, Eton College 1444-1830, Westminster School and Abbey 1574-1830, Charterhouse 1644-1830, Sandwich (St. Bartholomew's Hospital) 1543-1766, Greenwich Hospital 1712-1828, Chelsea Hospital 1702-1810, Lord Chamberlain's Department 1556-1830, Royal Works 1552-1814, Navy Victualling 1683-1826, Naval Stores 1566-1813. It is obvious, therefore, that students of the history of public administration will find the volume of deep interest, especially as the editors give an assurance that customary prices perpetuated, as was so often the case in official circles, from year to year, despite secular trends in competitive market prices, have been eliminated.

Prices are given for a wide range of commodities, illuminating commodity history as no other work has yet done. Particularly fascinating also is the possibility the volume gives of tracking down the variations in the prices of such staple articles of world trade as sugar, dried fruits and spices. Apart from the operation of broad economic causes the material of the complete work should throw light on those major upheavals such as the Black Death, Henry VIII's debasement of the coinage, the patents and monopolies of Elizabeth, James I and Charles I, and the "Industrial Revolution," upon which more detailed knowledge is still awaited.

These few random indications cannot point to more than a fraction of the wealth of information here so abundantly provided. It is to be hoped, however, that they may do something to make better known a work of enduring value, itself an impressive testimony to English scholarship and a monument of gratitude for that American support without which it probably would not yet have seen the light of day.

F. R. C.

Book Notes

The British Defense Program and Local Government.

The British Defense Program and Local Government is a compilation of extracts from British periodicals and magazines, linked by explanatory narrative designed to illustrate for American readers the effects of the national defence programme on the system and functions of local government in this country. It is called by its authors a pamphlet and does not set out to provide a comprehensive view of the subject, but rather to act as a useful introduction. The authors themselves frankly state certain limitations, the chief of them being that all the extracts were compiled before the invasion of the Netherlands and Belgium, and do not therefore show the effects on the local government services of active warfare.

Since the book is intended for American students of local government, most space is devoted to problems which are of interest for American local government, and the various sections of the study do not correspond either with their relative practical importance at the present time or with their interest to the English reader. Moreover, as is pointed out in the Introduction, the periodicals and journals used as sources themselves often serve as "forums for the expression by local officials of grievances and criticisms against the national government," and may tend to give a somewhat unduly gloomy view of the subject as a whole. To complete the picture, it would be necessary to have a similar compilation covering the same subjects from the standpoint of the central departments concerned.

The relationship between central and local government forms the background to the whole discussion. The authors point out how local government in the American sense hardly exists in this country, where all powers of the local authorities are derived directly from Parliament and where most services are carried out in collaboration with, and under the supervision of, one of the central departments of State. In the case of the Civil Defence Services, the local authorities have ceased even to be the partners of the central departments, but have become their agents, for the Exchequer foots virtually the whole of the bill. The effects of this on local government finance are discussed, but the authors do not seem to appreciate sufficiently the part played by the sanctioning powers of the central departments in acting as a brake not only on local extravagance but also at times on local initiative as well, without providing any impulse to overcome the inertia of unenterprising local authorities. This is a subject which needs a great deal of study and attention.

The qualities and defects of the Civil Defence Services have only become apparent since the beginning of the aerial bombardment of this country, and fall therefore quite outside the scope of the book under review. Such dislocation of the pre-war local services as existed at the time of compilation was due less to the creation and expansion of the A.R.P. services in the narrow sense, as to the movements of population due to evacuation and, in particular, to the lamentable divorce between evacuation and education. This could hardly be said to be the fault of the local authorities, but was due to lack of foresight and co-ordination between

Book Notes

the central departments concerned and the allocation of evacuation functions to the wrong types of local authorities.

It may be concluded from the extracts given that while the war has produced surprisingly little change in our system of local government as such, the shifting of the main body of local activity to the Civil Defence Services has in fact modified the position of the local authorities and thrown up a number of urgent problems concerning the relations between central and local government.

M. L. D.

Public Opinion Quarterly. Vol. 4, No. 2. June, 1940. (School of Public Affairs, Princeton University.) \$4 a year.

In addition to the interesting symposium on the public opinion polls discussed in an article elsewhere in this issue, the June issue of the *Public Opinion Quarterly* contains the usual interesting summaries of recent books, recent poll results and some technical studies. There is also a description of the publicity undertaken by the Federal Government to ensure the smooth operation of the 1940 Census.

F. R. C.

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